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Trudy and Timothy and the Trees

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"Trudy and Timothy Out-of-Doors"

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Trudy and Timothy and the Trees

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Introduction

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS:

If you have read "Trudy and Timothy" and "Trudy and Timothy Out-of-doors," you know just how Todd's Ferry looks, and all about the people there. So perhaps you will be glad now to go with the children who earned their trips to Washington; to leave the quiet country village, and stay for a while in the wonderful Capitol City.

But while you are enjoying the new scenes and friends with Trudy and Timothy, and Francis and Belle, strangers are coming to Todd's Ferry—strange men who bring with them a danger to the village and to all the folks who live there, although at first no one realizes this. Luckily, the Forest Ranger, telling his true wonder-stories to the children, teaches them to know this danger, so, when they come back and learn what is happening—but, that is the story

of "Trudy and Timothy and the Trees," and you want to read that for yourselves, don't you?

And find out the secret of the sap-house; learn what made dear Aunt Theresy sick, and why no one of the grown-ups could cure her; read about the "We Four—No More" club, and why they had to change the name; and, at last, you will see that Trudy and Timothy's good times in Washington not only gave them a wonderful vacation, but helped to save something that meant health, wealth and happiness to every one in Todd's Ferry; that means food and shelter and life to every one of us, everywhere!

"THOSE BIG PINES OVER YONDER TAKE MY EYE"

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Trudy and Timothy and the Trees

CHAPTER I

BUILDING THE SAP-HOUSE

"ARE we all ready?"

Father looked about him. He was standing in the doorway of the big white farmhouse, buttoning his sweater. Behind him, in the living-room, Grandmother was clearing the breakfast table.

"I'm ready," shouted Timothy, who was hopping about impatiently between the door-stone and the road. "I've been ready about ten hours!"

"Ten hours!" laughed Francis; "you were sound asleep ten hours ago."

"We're ready," announced Trudy, putting her arm about Belle Perkins.

Amos came around the corner of the house

with two saws and a hammer. "I'm all ready," he said. "Come on, let's get started. Lots to do."

Just then Grandfather backed the farm wagon out of the barn. It was loaded with boards, windows, a door, a keg of nails and some cans of paint, while two ladders stuck out at the back.

"Francis," called Grandfather, "I want you to ride with me and see that nothing falls off this load. Bring your crutches, for you'll do a lot of walking this day, and you may get tired."

"We'll meet you," said Father, as Francis hurried to the wagon. "We are going across lots. Come on, everybody."

Belle and Trudy skipped ahead. Father, Amos and Timothy, each carrying tools, followed. They crossed the road and disappeared behind the red barn.

As Amos had said, there was a great deal to do this bright cool October day. They were going to build a new sap-house in the maple grove that Grandfather Todd had bought from Aunt Theresy Hinton. In the spring they were going to make maple syrup there, and have a sugar

party, just like Mr. Turner. The grove was on a slope, not far from the big pine trees that Aunt Theresy owned and loved. You could reach it by driving along the road, past Mr. Turner's house, and going in by an old, over-grown wood road, or you could go, as the others preferred, by a lovely, winding path through the woods behind Grandfather's barn. Amos said it was a pretty good-looking path, even if the cows had made it, going to the brook to drink. And when you reached the brook there were big mossy stepping-stones to cross on, and another little path that Aunt Theresy's old Sukey had made, in her daily trips for water.

The path was brilliant to-day, all covered with bright red and yellow leaves that had fallen from the trees. Some of them had caught in the little pines and looked like gay blossoms among the green needles. The sky was clear blue, there were no clouds, and the strong northwest wind blew more and more leaves from the trees. As they walked along the path, the children scuffed their feet in the leaves. They ran and laughed and had such a good time. Timothy kept ahead,

but Belle and Trudy walked with their arms about each other where the path was wide enough, and talked about their trip to Washington.

Ever since the exhibition when Belle's preserves had taken first prize, and T. Todd's exhibit had won Mr. Johnston's special offer, the girls had been chums. The prizes were trips to Washington, and Mr. Johnston, who lived there every winter, had invited the three children—for Timothy had had a hand in the winning, and although he would not accept any part of the prize, had earned the money to go, too—to stay with him. He and his sister, Miss Margaret, were still in Todd's Ferry, and when they went home would take the party with them. So you see, there was a great deal to talk about.

Belle was a plump little girl, not quite so tall as Trudy, although she was a year older. She had blue eyes, and straight brown hair that she wore parted on the side and looped up in two braids, with big bows behind her ears.

Suddenly, while they were talking, they heard Timothy, far ahead, give a shout, and saw him rush up the side of the hill.

"Chestnuts! Chestnuts!" he called. "Come on and get some!"

And then, Washington forgotten, the girls raced up the hill too. They hunted in the yellow leaves for the prickly burrs, and for any loose nuts that the jays and squirrels had missed, but there were not many of these. Timothy stamped on the burrs, and the girls picked out the nuts. They filled their pockets and then hurried down to overtake Amos. He was waiting at the brook.

"Just saw a heron rise," he said. "There he goes—see his long legs?"

They walked along quickly now, for they wanted to reach the grove ahead of Francis and Grandfather. The men had been there the day before, dug the post-holes and set up the corner posts. The sap-house was to be a very grand sap-house; quite large, with bunks in it, in case anyone wanted to stay all night when the sap was running well. There was to be a stove; tables and stools made from logs; a closet with dishes, so you could cook your meals; and a strong lock for the door, with four keys—one for Grandfather, one for Father, one for Timothy and one

for Amos. Because there were strange lumbermen about Todd's Ferry now, working on various wood-lots, and they had been known to go into sap-houses to sleep, and to borrow pans and kettles and go away without washing them. The Todd family did not want any strangers using their nice new sap-house.

At last they saw the grove. Ahead of them, at the end of the path, the maples burned like flames between the green pines that grew thick on either side. Among the glowing trees they could see the heaps of brown earth left from digging the post-holes, the new yellow posts and the pile of lumber that Grandfather had brought the day before. But Grandfather and Francis had not yet come. They soon heard them, talking as they drove slowly up the soft wood road. Grandfather unharnessed Jack-horse, and tied him to a tree. Timothy blanketed him, and Amos began to unload the wagon. Francis walked around the four poles that were the beginning of the sap-house, while the girls showed him where the doors and windows were to be. It did seem so good to have Francis walking like other peo-

ple. When he had come to Todd's Ferry he could not walk at all, and practically lived in his wheel chair. The French surgeon had cured him, just as Mr. Johnston had hoped, and now Francis used his crutches only when he was tired.

Very soon the jays, screaming in the trees, found their cries drowned out by the hammering and sawing and pounding and chattering of the human creatures that had come so boldly into their woods. Grandfather and Timothy put boards across saw-horses, and measured and sawed; Amos nailed the boards in place, and Francis fetched and carried tools. The girls were raking up chips and smoothing the piles of earth in places where they found a chance to work. Such a busy, noisy time! And how fast the sap-house grew! It did not seem any time at all before Amos had to climb a ladder and Grandfather had to lift the boards up to him. They were all so busy that they never heard the laughter that sounded down the wood road, or the calls that drifted through the bright trees. They were too busy to see the carry-all that came slowly toward the sap-house, and not until Jack-

horse whinnied did they look up from their work. Then ——

"Oh, see—all the folks! Goody—goody ——"

"Grandmother, see the sap-house," shouted Timothy.

"I'm nailing on boards," came Francis' voice from high up on the farther side. "Is Miss Margaret there?"

"Oh, do be careful! Don't fall, Francis," she called, jumping out of the carry-all. "Isn't it splendid? See how much you have done!"

"Help me with these baskets," said Mr. Johnston. "Where's the can of milk?"

They all stopped work then and gathered about the new arrivals. Mr. Johnston had brought Grandmother and Mother and Miss Margaret over to see the sap-house, and they had a dinner for everyone. And how surprised the carpenters were when Mr. Johnston said it was almost twelve o'clock.

"Take a rest now," said Grandmother, "and have dinner. In the old days, when anyone built a house or barn—'raised it,' they used to say—the women-folks always brought the dinner out

to the workers. It saved time, and when it was too dark to work any more, they could go into the house and have a hearty meal. We thought that old custom was a good one to follow, and here we are with the lunch. I hope you are glad to see us."

They certainly were, and they spread the carriage robes on the ground and sat about in a big circle, while the jays hopped as near as they dared, hoping for crumbs.

"I wish I had a good drink of water," remarked Amos, as he stood up and stretched himself. "Milk is all right, but there's nothing like water for quenching your thirst. It's quite a walk to Theresy's spring."

"You come with me," said Timothy. "You all come. I've something to show you. I discovered it yesterday."

He led the way to a ledge of rock at the back of the sap-house. A witch hazel bush grew at its base, and dry ferns crackled under their feet. He stooped over, pushing the ferns aside and lifting the drooping branches of witch hazel. In a little hidden hollow, between four or five rocks,

was a tiny pool of water, clear and moving a bit in the center.

"A perfectly good spring," he declared; "I know, for I saw the frog in it."

"The frog?" It was Francis who cried out.

"Sure—that's a sign the water is fresh. No frog will live in a bad spring."

"I ought to have remembered this," said Amos, filling a drinking-cup. "This is 'Old Unfailing,' where we always used to drink when we cut lumber on this side of the hill. The place has grown up so it did not look natural. Good for you, Timothy! You'll always have water for your camp, for this spring never freezes, even in the coldest weather."

Francis forgot all about the frog when he had a drink of the icy spring water, and Grandfather said, "We must clean this out, and mark it, and hang a dipper on the bush so any thirsty man may drink."

After lunch, the work went on again. When the boards were all in place, Amos said, "Where's the tar paper, Sam? We could make a beginning on that if we had it."

"No tar paper on this sap-house," declared Father, and Grandfather laughed.

"The children won't have it, Amos," he explained. "They insist on having a stylish sap-house, so I'm going to clapboard it, to please them. It will look more like a summer hotel than a place to make sugar, but I don't admire tar paper myself."

"And don't forget the green stain," Miss Margaret reminded him. "You know you promised to stain it green, because I want it that way."

"When you come to *my* maple-sugar party, you'll have to wear white gloves," chuckled Grandfather, "to keep up with the style of the house."

When they drove away from the unfinished building they could all imagine how it would look in a few days—stained a dark green like the pine trees whose tops towered above the maples—with a long table in the cozy room, and stools drawn up to it, the stove in the corner, and the bunks along the walls.

"We must bring Aunt Theresy over to see it," said Francis.

"Let's go and tell her about it now," suggested Timothy. "May we, Grandmother?"

"Oh, Mrs. Todd," begged Belle, "let Trudy walk home that way with me, please? We can stop and see Aunt Theresy, and Pa has to go up to the farmhouse to-night with some freight, and he'll bring Trudy home from our house."

So, at the main road, Trudy and Belle and Timothy left the others and walked down, past the big pines, to the little house where Aunt Theresy Hinton lived, alone with the treasures that her ancestors had brought in sailing vessels across the great seas, years and years ago.

They went around to the back door and knocked. No one came. They thought perhaps that Aunt Theresy had gone to the village for her mail, so they peeped in at the kitchen window. Then they tiptoed hurriedly down the steps and looked at each other, very solemnly. They had all seen it.

In a rocking-chair in the kitchen was Aunt Theresy. She had her blue checked apron up to her face, and she was very still. But they had

seen her wipe her eyes. Aunt Theresy was crying, and Aunt Theresy was all alone.

"We'll just go 'round to the front door, and ring the bell loud, and pretend we've just come," said Trudy, "then if it's anything she wants us to know, she'll tell us, and if it isn't, why, we mustn't say anything about it."

When Aunt Theresy came to the front door she seemed just as glad to see them as ever, and she wanted to hear all about the sap-house, but she did not talk quite as much as usual, and her eyes were red.

On the road to the village, they wondered about it.

"Why did your grandfather buy her sugar orchard anyway?" asked Belle. "He has one of his own, hasn't he?"

"Yes," said Timothy, "but he said it was a long way off, and this one would be a good deal handier."

"Well, Aunt Theresy has sold lots of her land, Pa says."

"And she doesn't keep her walls and fences up——"

"And she sold her horse, and walks all that long way to the village!"

That evening Timothy tried to ask Grandfather more about Aunt Theresy and her sugar orchard, but Grandmother sent him to bed and he did not get much information. While he was wondering about it before he went to sleep Belle Perkins was sitting at the table with her father, who was having a late supper after an extra trip with the stage. She was telling him about the new sap-house.

"Oh, it's going to be great, Pa," she said, "but why did Aunt Theresy sell her sugar orchard?"

"Why?" repeated Mr. Perkins, taking a great swallow of tea. "Why? Because she had to, that's why! Theresy Hinton is poorer than Job's cat!"

CHAPTER II

THE TREES

THE children were puzzled when Belle told them what her father had said; they thought at first they would speak to Mr. Johnston about Aunt Theresy, but, if she were really very poor, he would want to help her, and he had helped so many people since he came to Todd's Ferry that perhaps he couldn't afford to keep on forever. And Trudy's father and mother always discouraged talking about people's affairs. But the children knew that Aunt Theresy would never cry unless she felt dreadfully, so at last they told Amos.

"Poorer than Job's cat?" said Amos. "Well, now I've read about Job in the Bible, and I can't recollect the cat, but Job did have a hard time, lost all his money and all his property, and as I remember, his friends weren't any too helpful about it. But that's the difference. Maybe

Aunt Theresy hasn't much money, but she has lots of friends. And since she came back to Todd's Ferry this time, I guess she has made a few new ones—kind of young, maybe, but I rather think they will stand by her. If you have good friends, you're not poor."

He was standing in Father's shed, and Trudy and Timothy were measuring out feed for the hens' breakfast. Now that the boarding-houses were closed, Amos's fish trade was not so brisk. He made only three trips a week, and on the other days he did painting and carpentering or took a vacation, as he called a long day in the woods.

"Nice day for a vacation," he said now. "I came up to see if you would like to go exploring. Few little things I want to find out. Mr. Johnston's going into business, isn't he?" he added as Father came out from the kitchen.

Father laughed. "He just telephoned that he wanted me all day," he said. "They came last night. Good day to do it, isn't it? But how did you know, Amos? You must be a mind reader."

"No—saw the hampers at the station last night."

"What hampers?"

"What is it? What do you mean? Tell us!"

Trudy and Timothy were pulling at Father and Amos.

"Do you remember the first time you ever saw Mr. Johnston?" asked Father.

"I guess I do. Trudy and I were in the woods getting evergreen for the Christmas wreaths, and we heard a noise, and there he was, looking just like Santa Claus, only he had on a fur coat instead of a red one, and he was feeling of the trees. We thought he was really Santa Claus picking out Christmas trees!"

"And don't you think so now?"

"Well ——" Timothy hesitated.

"If he wasn't then, he's going to be now; at least he's going into the business," explained Amos. "He is going to raise Christmas trees."

"You remember the sloping pasture that we passed when we drove from Aunt Theresy's to his house, the day we hung the May-baskets?

He has decided that field is exactly suited to spruce and hemlock trees. There are several acres in the pasture, the land is too poor to plant, so because he doesn't believe in letting land go to waste, and because he thinks everyone should plant trees, he's going to do his share."

"Is he really going to sell Christmas trees?"

"I don't think so, but he likes to call them by that name. I'm going up now to help him. The trees have come, and the dealer has sent men to set them out for him."

"I want to improve my education by seeing it done," Amos said, "and I thought perhaps you would keep me company."

Miss Fields had given them a holiday, and Belle had gone to Concord, so Trudy had expected a lonely day; but here was a wonderful chance for a good time. Mother put up a lunch, they went over to Grandfather's and borrowed the buckboard, then drove up to the big house for Francis. There was no need now to put the wheel chair on the buckboard. Francis and Trudy were on the seat with Amos, and Timothy sat behind and dragged his heels in the dry grass

that grew high between the wheel tracks in the road.

"We haven't had a real picnic for a long time," said Amos, "and I guess this will be all new ground for Francis. We'll call it a tree day. We will watch the men setting out Mr. Johnston's forest, then I'll take you around to see the big trees that were uprooted by the tornado a hundred years ago; and last, we'll drive up the mountain road and see the steam sawmill."

"Oh, won't that be great!"

For several weeks a whistle had been heard in Todd's Ferry from high on the mountain. Three times a day it blew; at seven in the morning, at noon, and at five in the afternoon, and so regularly that people had formed the habit of setting their clocks by it. It was the whistle on the steam sawmill, calling the men to work and to meals. The mill could not be seen from the village, but the bare spots where the lumber had been cut were clearly visible, and huge piles of fresh yellow sawdust glistened in the afternoon sun.

"No need to hurry," said Amos. "We'll drive along leisurely to Johnston's pasture. I don't imagine these imported farmers get to work very early."

But when they reached the hillside pasture they found a busy place. Five strange men were there. Mr. Johnston and Father were standing by the bars, unpacking hampers that were filled with bundles of young trees, carefully packed, with wet moss tied around their roots. The men had dug a sloping trench, and on the side of it they laid the little trees; first dipping their roots into a puddle of thin mud (a brook ran through this corner of the pasture) and then packing earth firmly about them to keep the tender little roots from drying. Later the men worked in pairs, and Father helped. One man went ahead with a mattock—a pick-axe with one end flat—and he cut away the grass and dug the hole for the tree. The second man followed, carrying some trees in a bucket of the thin mud. He put the trees in the holes that the first man had made ready, and packed the earth firm and hard about them. They were planted in long, straight rows.

"Some day, when you children are grown up," said Mr. Johnston, "you will come here and walk in a splendid forest."

"But look at all the trees on the hills, and all the trees in Todd's Ferry," objected Timothy. "I should think there were trees enough to last forever."

"Wait till you see the sawmill," said Amos. "You can destroy a tree a great deal quicker than you can make one grow. It takes thirty, forty, fifty years to get a big tree, and you can cut one down, saw it into boards and sell the boards, all in a few days. And now we are going over to see the old roots," he told Mr. Johnston. And to the children, as they drove along the grassy wood road, he said, "Watch for some big trees, flat on their sides, with their roots sticking up in the air."

"Which side of the road?"

"That's for you to find out."

"All right! Francis, you take that side. I'll take this."

"I can see both sides," said Timothy, "and

I've seen 'em before. I'll bet you'll miss them, and I'll see them first."

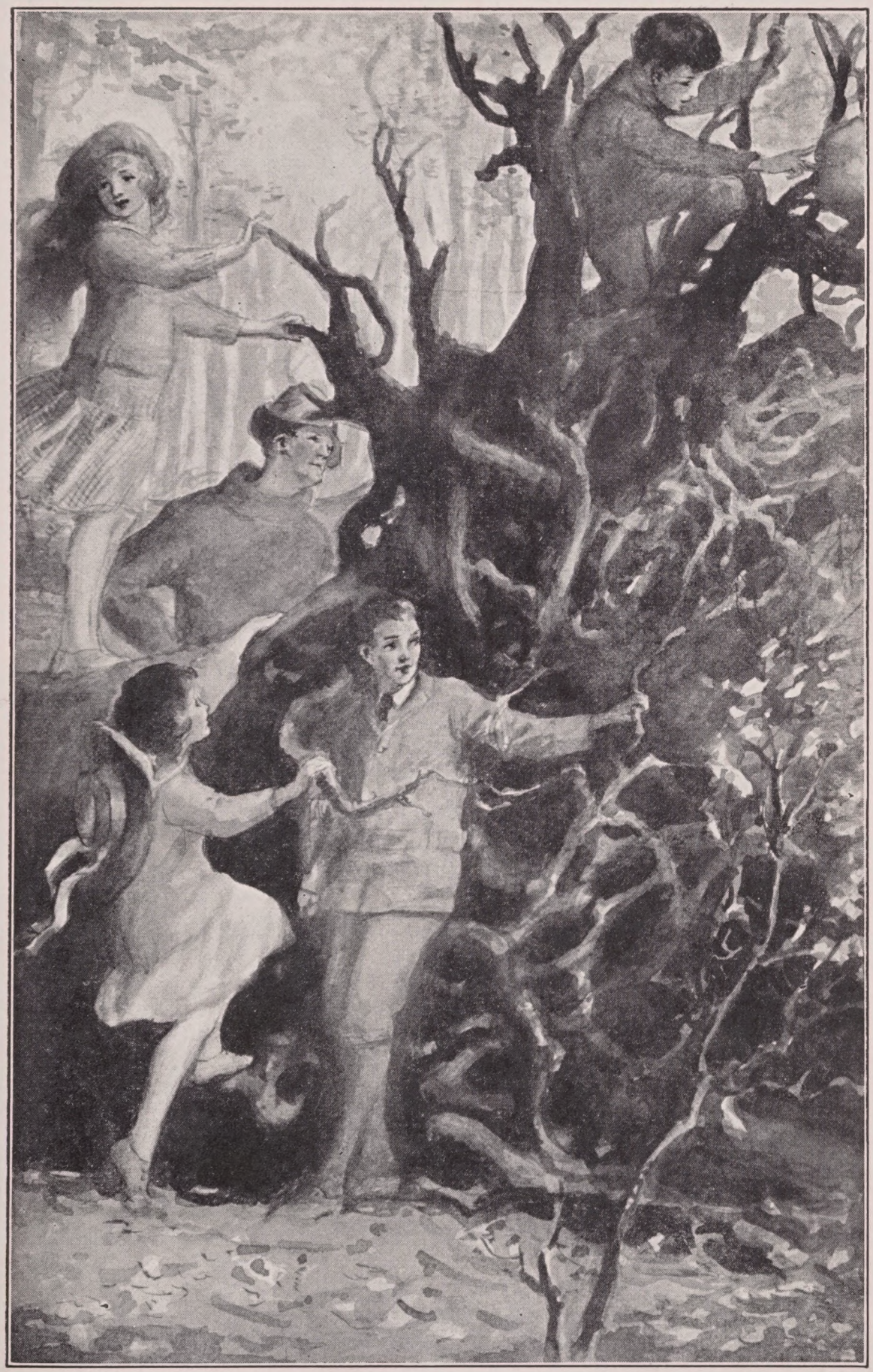
Trudy thought that giant trees with roots sticking up in the air would be easy to find, but even when Amos stopped the horse and said, "Now they are in plain sight," she could not locate them.

"Away in there?" she cried, when at last he pointed with the whip. "You said they were on the old post road."

"And so they were, a hundred years ago, but the old road is all grown up, and this new one is not in the same place."

Francis was already out of the buckboard and following Timothy into the woods. "Come on," he called, "I can see them."

It seemed so good to have Francis tramping with them, instead of sitting in the wagon while they brought things to him. Now he led them all as they pushed their way through the bushes. Dry leaves fluttered to the ground as they passed, goldenrod and late purple asters came nearly to their waists, and blackberry vines pulled them back with clinging thorns. But at last they saw



THE ROOTS TOWERED HIGH ABOVE THEIR HEADS

the trees. Just long ridges in the floor of the woods, half buried in the earth; the outside layer of their wood was soft and crumbling, with ferns and even slender young trees growing out of them. The tangled masses of the roots, hard and smooth as polished stone, stood upright. The spaces between them were filled with rocks and earth. Ferns grew from them too. The roots towered high above their heads, and they could see one rock firmly caught that was bigger than a sap bucket.

"Weren't they giants?" said Trudy. "As big as Aunt Theresy's trees."

"They were some of the same group of trees," said Amos. "I mean they were probably of the same age. Aunt Theresy's trees, fortunately, were not in the path of the hurricane, and so escaped. You can imagine what the wind must have been, to blow down trees like these."

"I'm glad it didn't get Aunt Theresy's trees," said Timothy. "They are quite a curiosity."

"Oh, I hope nothing will ever happen to them," said Trudy; "it would be terrible to lose those tall, tall trees."

"Well, now you have seen trees at the beginning of their life, and at the end of their life," said Amos. "Suppose we keep on and see the trees that are being murdered."

"Murdered?" gasped Trudy.

"That's what I call it, the way Perkins is selling off his lumber on the mountain. He doesn't need the money, but a lumber company offered him a big price for his trees, so he is letting them cut wherever they like. Now there are three or four brooks that run down through his land and feed the lake. When the trees are all cut those brooks will be rushing floods. They will wash and gully the whole mountainside in the spring when the snow melts, and dry all up in the summer. Reckless cutting like that makes floods and destruction. But the government is going to step in pretty soon and make us take care of the forests. There, I'm preaching you a sermon, but I do get so angry when I see anyone as foolish as Perkins is."

"I don't believe Belle knows it's wrong," said Trudy. "She wouldn't let her father do it if she did."

"Better tell her," suggested Amos.

They drove up the steep mountain road, Francis driving Jack-horse while the others walked on all the sharpest pitches to save the horse. Often they stopped to rest him on the level places, and then they turned and looked down on Todd's Ferry. The lake was like a blue heart, and the island a flaming crescent. The church tower was white among the trees that were rapidly turning now, red and brown and golden, with the green pines showing clearly among the bright autumn colors. After awhile they reached Mr. Perkins' wood-lots.

"There!" exclaimed Amos. "Now, honestly, do you call that a pretty sight?"

As far as they could see, on both sides of the road, were the ruins of the forest; jagged yellow stumps with dried pitch that had oozed out of the cuts; old dried branches thrown helter-skelter in untidy piles; all the young underbrush broken and trampled. New boards were piled up by the roadside to dry and season. They could hear the buzz-zz-zz of the steam saw, and the voices of the workmen. Soon they passed huge piles of saw-

dust, as high as small houses. "That all came from the edges of the boards when they were cut," said Amos.

The sawmill was roofed over, but had no sides. An engine was chug-chugging there, and the great circular saw was biting its way into a tree that moved along on rollers as board after board was cut away. The sawdust was flying up from the saw, like wet, yellow snow. On the opposite side of the road were the rough shacks where the men camped. Trudy did not like it at all, but she wanted to see everything, so she followed Amos and the boys over to the mill. Francis and Timothy were rather quiet. Really, there was so much noise you could not talk. If you wanted to say anything, you had to shout.

"Bring the kids up to enlarge their education?" yelled the sawyer to Amos.

Amos nodded, wishing he might teach the sawyer some of the things he had been telling the children. The man stopped the saw, and they all went close to look at it. Francis had expected to see a thin piece of metal, like Grandfather's hand saw, but instead he found a heavy,

thick metal disc, with separate teeth that fitted into sockets on the edge; these teeth were as wide as his finger, and the sawyer explained that the teeth chewed into the log, very, very fast, one after the other and so made a clean cut.

"We're coming down your way, soon," he said to Amos quite as if it was a pleasant piece of news. "Perkins has a wood-lot down near those big pines that we are going to cut for him just as soon as we finish here. By the way, who owns the big trees? They would make some sizeable boards. With the price of lumber as it is now, they are worth money. Ought not to leave them to spoil."

"The owner won't sell," said Amos shortly.

They did not want to eat their lunch near the sawmill, so they drove down the mountain, Jack-horse zig-zagging down the steep road, until they found a spot near a brook that rushed along so swiftly over the stones and made so much noise that they could not hear the saw. Below, they could see their homes safe and sheltered among the strong trees.

"When I grow up," said Timothy, taking a

bite of hard-boiled egg, "I'm going to have the best farm in all Todd's Ferry. I'm going to learn how to do things right, the way Uncle Sam does, and I'm going to raise the best crops, and have the biggest trees of anyone 'round here. I'm never going to live in the city, but stay in my own home town and be a farmer. And I'm going to have a big automobile too—a yellow one, like Mr. Sims'—so I can go anywhere I want to for a vacation."

"Good for you," approved Amos; "stick to that, lad. Nobody can live without the land. Food, clothing and shelter, all come from it. The farmer is a man to be honored, and the country is a place where it is a privilege to live. Gracious!" he exclaimed, laughing, "I shall surely turn into a preacher before this Tree Day is over! That's the second sermon, so far. Well, I won't preach any more to-day. Trudy, pass me some more of that cold chicken, please."

CHAPTER III

CHRISTMAS

When Belle came back from Concord, Trudy told her about the wonderful tree day, and begged her to ask her father not to cut down all his trees.

"I don't know whether it would do any good," said Belle; "when Pa makes up his mind, it's awfully hard to turn him. And I guess he doesn't make as much money as he used to, now the boarding-houses are sending their own autos after the boarders. Pa used to bring everybody on the stage. He's going to have an automobile stage next season. I guess he has to sell the trees, and the lumber company pays good money; I heard him say so."

"Well, you ask him anyway. It would be perfectly dreadful to have all the land around the big pines and Aunt Theresy's house and our new sap-house looking like that place up on the mountain!"

"All right. And now I've something to tell you. I know what made Aunt Theresy cry! She's sold her cow!"

"Sold her cow? Why, what will she do for milk and butter? Who bought the cow?"

Belle had just time to say, "A man from Prattville," when Miss Fields rang the bell and they had to hurry back to school. But all the afternoon Trudy thought about Aunt Theresy and the cow, and as soon as she got home she told Father and Mother about it.

"Just as I thought," said Father, looking at Mother. "She ——" and then he stopped and began to whistle.

"But, Father, can't we give her some of our milk? Where will she get any? There isn't any house very near her."

"There's just the trouble, Trudy-girl. Nobody can *give* Aunt Theresy Hinton anything. She is very proud, and wants to pay for everything she has, but she hasn't the money to do it with. But don't worry; none of us will see her want for anything."

"Anyway, it's most Christmas, and she has

promised to spend the day with Grandmother. We're going to have a tree, and she will have to take the Christmas presents we give her!"

Mother laughed. "Of course she will, but not if you put a cow on the tree."

Mr. Turner solved the milk difficulty. Timothy saw him soon after this, and heard about it.

"I'm taking milk to Aunt Theresy," he said, as they drove over the hard-frozen road from the village. "You know my housekeeper isn't much on sewing, so I asked Theresy if she'd be willing to mend me up, clothes and bedding and dish-towels, and make a few braided rugs for the floor, and knit me some socks. And I said I had more milk than I could use, and I'd be obliged if she'd take the pay in milk."

"That's a good idea all round," approved Amos when Timothy told him about it. "Turner needs some new rugs. I know, for I almost broke my neck the last time I carried fish into his house. Cat heard my horn and came running to meet me; I tried to dodge the cat and caught my toe in a hole in the rug; fish went up into the air and came right down on the cat's back. Cat was

so scared she jumped, but she came down on the fish and stayed there, and Turner had to buy some more fish for his dinner. Cheaper for him to get a new rug."

For some time it had been cold and the ground was frozen hard. The roads were jagged with wheel ruts. A few days before Christmas came the snow. It began in the night, and snowed for two days, making the roads and fields one unbroken stretch of glistening white that almost put out your eyes when the sun shone again. The whole of Todd's Ferry sparkled like a huge Christmas card, and the evergreens and the blue smoke from the chimneys were the only bits of color. Mr. Turner and Grandfather harnessed their four yoke of oxen to the big snow-roller, and the men of Todd's Ferry assembled to break out the roads. Miss Margaret and the children rode on the roller, gathering branches of pine and fir to make the Christmas wreaths.

Grandmother had planned a family Christmas for the farmhouse. She and Mother had cooked; Trudy and Timothy and Francis had made candy; and the men had cracked nuts and shelled

pop-corn in the evenings. Mr. Johnston had had a hand in everything. Of course the Johnstons were coming for Christmas, and Amos and Aunt Theresy. Belle would come up after dinner. Her father wanted her at home, to eat Christmas dinner with her own family, but Trudy had insisted that her chum must spend a part of the day with her. And then, in the evening, there was to be a marvellous tree.

Just the day before Christmas Mr. Johnston walked into the busy kitchen. His face was very solemn. He sat down by the sink and never said a word. He did not even try to taste of the cake that Grandmother was packing away in a jar.

"Gracious, brother, what *is* the matter?" said Miss Margaret.

"Santa Claus has a sore throat, and can't speak a loud word!"

"Oh, isn't that a shame? Poor Mr. Turner! He has that throat trouble almost every winter. What will they do?"

Mr. Turner had offered to be the Santa Claus for the tree at the Town Hall on Christmas night, so that Mr. Johnston could have his own celebra-

tion with the Todds. The Sunday School always had a tree on Christmas night.

"Well, they'll have to get somebody else," said Trudy decidedly.

Mr. Johnston looked at her. "They've tried," he said, "but most of the Todd's Ferry men are skinny."

"Let 'em put sofa pillows under their coats," scolded Trudy. "Oh, I know what you mean. They have asked you, and you think you ought to do it, and spoil our lovely party. And I think it's mean of Mr. Turner to have a sore throat, so there!"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Grandfather, who was warming his feet at the stove. "No one has a sore throat on purpose. I suppose that housekeeper of his is dosing him with onion syrup this very minute. I've had to take onion syrup. *I* sympathize with Turner."

"Would it make very much difference if we went to that tree and had our things down there?" suggested Francis. "Then Mr. Johnston could be Santa Claus, everybody would have a good time, and Mr. Turner wouldn't be worry-

ing. We could have our fun here in the afternoon."

"Let's take some of our things to the Town Hall and put them on that tree!" cried Miss Margaret. "And we could have our tree, just the same, only have it in the afternoon, and then nobody would be disappointed."

"Oh, all right, I don't care."

And then everyone was as busy as could be, wrapping and tying and marking parcels; and when the company came to the farmhouse, early on Christmas morning, each one looked as if he carried a Santa Claus pack.

The tree was covered with bundles, white and red and green, and more were piled about it on the floor. Belle came right after dinner, and as soon as the dishes were done, they all gathered in the parlor to have their celebration. The tree, tall and thick, stood in the corner. After they were all seated, from behind it came a thin, squeaky voice:

"I am Jack Frost, a lanky lad,
I bring you Santa's greetings glad!
Poor Santa's voice has gone quite dumb,

So, in his place, Jack Frost has come!
Jack Frost, who makes the snowflakes fall
On fields and trees, and on you all!"

The voice rose higher and higher behind the tree, and a white figure climbed up and up, until it stood peering over the topmost branches. Just as it spoke the last words, it raised its arms and hurled long crinkly white paper streamers over everyone. In and out, up and down, they twisted and floated, turning and tangling until everybody in the room was caught in the paper snow. And then the figure spoke again:

"From north, and south, and east, and west,
I bring you presents of the best!"

And then it reached down among the packages and began to pick them from the tree.

"Here, Aunt Theresy, this one is for you! Catch! It feels soft."

And it was Amos! Amos, dressed all in white, with a white mask, and a white cotton-wool wig, standing on a step-ladder, concealed behind the tree. He pulled off his mask.

"Don't blame me," he begged. "It was that lady over there who made me do it. She made me this suit and then bullied me into playing Jack Frost. She's so fond of white herself, she had to have some in the celebration. I suppose now that I have made such a reputation in moving pictures, I shan't have a week without someone asking me to take part in some kind of theatricals. See what it is to be famous!"

Aunt Theresy had been undoing her parcel. It was a lovely knitted shawl, soft gray with a white border, from Mother.

Oh, there were so many things: a whole box of preserves for Aunt Theresy from Trudy and Timothy and Belle; aprons for Grandmother and Mother and Miss Margaret; neckties for the men; boxes of candy; and, at last, for Miss Margaret, another soft bundle that was another shawl, but made of white silk with wonderful white embroidery on it that made everyone exclaim with admiration. "Oh, the lovely thing, where did it come from?" she cried, and then Francis put one arm about her neck. "My mother sent it from Armenia," he said, "to the

White Lady who takes such good care of her boy!"

And now there were left on the tree only four bundles, all alike; flat, oblong and thin they were, one for each of the children. Amos tossed them all at once. "Open them together," he said. "I know what they are, and we only want to hear one squeal."

They heard it. For the bundles were Washington guide-books!

"Yes," gasped Mr. Johnston after the hugs he received, "I want you to get some idea of the place you're going to visit, and decide what you want to see. Study the books, and study the map. Learn the location of the principal places. I shall be busy while we are there, and not always able to go about with you; but if you prove yourselves familiar with the places, and trustworthy, you may take some trips without us grown-ups."

"Come on!" shouted Timothy, rushing for the kitchen table, "let's do it now!"

"Get pencil and paper, and we'll each write down the things we want to see. Then we can compare notes, and decide what to do first."

"Oh, Trudy, what a lovely idea!" agreed Belle.

For a little while the grown folks heard no sound from the kitchen but the turning of leaves, little exclamations of wonder, and Timothy's whistling. When they had picked up all the paper and string, and put their gifts into piles to take home, they began to wonder what the children were doing, and went out into the kitchen.

Francis, and Belle, and Trudy were still busily writing. Sheets of paper, filled with names and words, lay before them, but Timothy sat with his hands behind his head, his new guide-book stuffed into one pocket, and no paper visible. He was staring at the ceiling and whistling softly. He seemed very quiet and very happy.

"Well, folks," said Mr. Johnston, "how are you getting on?"

"Pretty well," replied Francis, "but it takes a long time."

"There is so much to write down," said Belle.

"I haven't done very much yet," Trudy smiled at him, "because I have been studying the map, trying to find your house."

Timothy said nothing, but whistled the same tune over and over.

"How about you, Timothy?"

"Oh, I was done a long time ago!"

"*Done!*"

"Sure—you kids are slow!"

"But how could you do it so quick?"

Timothy grinned up at Mr. Johnston, and handed him a tiny scrap of crumpled paper that he pulled from his pocket. Mr. Johnston glanced at it and laughed, and laughed! He laughed so long that everyone began to laugh too, without knowing why.

When he could stop, he said, in such a weak little voice, "Timothy, Timothy, you're all right! I'll do my level best to have you see every single thing that you have put down on your list!"

"What does he want to see?" they all cried.

"I'll read you his list," replied Mr. Johnston. And he read just one word—"Everything!"

And after that it was time for supper; just a hurried lunch, for they were all anxious to get to the church tree, and besides, they had made up a basket of goodies for poor, sick Mr. Santa Claus

Turner. Mr. Johnston put on his Santa Claus dress at the farmhouse and persuaded Amos to go with him and help as Jack Frost, so Amos put on the white costume again, and they drove around by Mr. Turner's house, and scared his housekeeper dreadfully when the two figures appeared at the door. Poor Mr. Turner wanted to laugh, but could only make little crackling sounds in his throat. Amos pulled out a package of cough drops tied with wide, red ribbon, and thrust them in his hand as they hurried away.

At the Town Hall, Santa and Jack Frost waited until the entertainment was over, and then raced in the door and down the aisle as if they had just arrived from the North Pole and hadn't a minute to stay. Santa told them he was extra busy this year, and had to bring Jack Frost along as a helper, and Amos bowed very low to right and left, and said again, in his squeaky little voice:

"From north, and south, and east, and west,
We bring you presents of the best!"

and delivered the gifts, racing and scampering

about among the audience, dodging the hands that tried to catch him and see who he was. No one guessed until, just as the fun was almost over, Ben Dobson came into the hall. Amos rushed at him with a present and away again, but Ben gave a great shout, "That's Amos Bean! I saw the patch I put on his shoe."

So Amos pulled off his mask, and sat down to get cool, and Miss Fields began to play the organ. Soon the talking stopped, and people hummed as she played the tunes they knew. The babies went to sleep, but soon the grown-ups and the children began to sing, so that Mr. Perkins, driving from the station with a belated passenger, heard the song coming across the still white snow from the lighted church:

"For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O, morning stars, together,
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to men on earth."

CHAPTER IV

THE JOURNEY

THE winter term of school began in January, and the children were glad to go back. They brought their sleds, their skates, and some of them came to school on snowshoes. The lake was frozen deep, and at recess and after school the boys and girls skated, watching their fathers cut ice and haul it to their ice-houses for use in the summer. The ice was packed in sawdust that came from the great piles left by the steam sawmill.

The lumbermen were still at Todd's Ferry, and were chopping down trees and hauling them on sleds to the mill. Mr. Perkins had sold part of his lower lot to them, but had not yet decided whether he would let them cut near Aunt Theresy's land. Belle had told him what Trudy had said about trees, and he had said, "Well, well, I'll see," but he said it in a very discouraging

manner. He seemed much more interested in the price he was getting for his trees than in the trees which he was destroying.

The Bird Club was rather dull. Birds were scarce, but the members watched, for there was always the chance of seeing some cheery little winter visitor. Crows were heard often, and the merry, friendly chickadees hopped and called in the roadside trees. Francis saw some cross-bills in Miss Margaret's garden, and Amos saw a flock of snow buntings when he came back from Prattville one day.

The people who were going to Washington in the spring were very busy. Belle and Trudy were helping their mothers make clothes; Timothy was forever figuring how much he could see with the money he had to spend; and Francis was planning the things he wanted to show the others.

They planned to go about the first of April. "Washington is lovely in April and early May," said Miss Margaret. "All the trees are so fresh and new, the tulips and shrubs in the parks and squares are in full bloom, and everybody feels happy."

"Yes," agreed Timothy, "and if we go then, we shall have plenty of time to get our sugar made. I'm going to make a lot for Aunt Theresy. She's knitting me some mittens and a muffler, and I'm going to pay her in sugar."

"Oh," exclaimed Trudy, "and the sugar party is going to be at our new sap-house this year. Mr. Turner and all the scholars are coming! And this time Miss Margaret and Mr. Johnston won't be company, they'll be own folks!"

January passed. February came with gray days, and snow squalls and wind, and now and then a day of hot sun that melted the snow and thinned the ice over the brooks so that you could see them rushing along beneath, and watch the green watercress swaying and dipping in the cold, cold water. One or two brave robins flew silently out from the deep woods where they had spent the winter. It was splendid sap weather, thawing days and freezing nights, and everyone got out buckets and drills, and tapped a few trees to watch the sap.

And then, about ten o'clock at night, on the very day before Amos and Timothy planned to

start real sap-making, Mr. McAdam telephoned a telegram to Mr. Johnston. And Mr. Johnston called up the Todds and the Perkinses that very night—they had to get out of bed to answer the call—saying, "Just got an urgent message calling me back to Washington. Do you suppose you can get the children ready to start the day after to-morrow?"

Such a scurrying and hurrying as there was next day! Trunks to be packed, unfinished sewing to be planned, Miss Fields to be told, all the good-byes to be said, some over the telephone; a last call on Aunt Theresy, and oh, so many things to be said to Amos!

They all talked to him at once until he said, "Wait a minute, just one mo-ment, please!" and pulled a little memorandum book from his pocket, with a stubby pencil. "Now, go ahead," he ordered. "Ladies first. What do you say, Belle?"

Belle had brought her clothes up to Trudy's house to pack, for they were to share Mother's trunk. She was going through the room with her arms full of dresses.

"You write to us every day, and tell us everything."

"Write every day," repeated Amos, jotting that down in his book.

"Be sure and tend to the maple sugar, and give Aunt Theresy all she will take."

"Make maple sugar for Timothy Todd."

"Keep your eye on those old steam sawmill men."

"Good idea, Francis. I'll be sure to do that."

"Don't let anything happen to anybody, and take good care of Snowball and Dilly, and everything."

"Take care of cats and everybody else. Well, it looks as if I should be fairly busy for the next few weeks. When do you expect to come home, anyway?"

But no one could answer that question. It was enough to be really going to Washington, without planning on coming home.

Next morning they went. Mr. Perkins drove them to the station, and Trudy and Belle cried a little when they said "Good-bye." Timothy and Francis were busy checking the trunks, and could

hardly stop to shake hands. The last person they saw as the train pulled out from the station was Amos, waving his knitted cap.

After they were settled Trudy opened a little note that he had thrust into her hand as the train started. She read it aloud.

"If you want anything on the journey to Washington, ask Mr. Porter. He'll get it for you."

"Now what does he mean by that? How are we going to know Mr. Porter?"

Francis and the Johnstons knew, and they smiled, but only said, "Wait and see."

They reached Boston a little after noon, and drove to the hotel where they were to spend the night. Mr. Johnston wanted them to travel in the daytime, as he thought they would enjoy seeing the country.

After dinner they went to the moving pictures, and then to supper at a big restaurant. Belle and Trudy, sharing the same room at the hotel, could hardly go to sleep, they were so excited with all the new things. Trudy had never slept in a hotel when she lived in Boston, and this was

Belle's first journey beyond Concord. It seemed so queer to have a telephone in your bedroom, but it was even more queer to have it ring early in the morning before daylight, and to tumble out of bed and climb on a chair to reach the high receiver, and to say, " Hello," and then to hear a pleasant voice say, " Good-morning, six o'clock, please."

The Washington train started at nine, and there was not much time. They had breakfast in the deserted dining-room, with only two or three other early parties, and then rode across the city to the South Station.

While Mr. Johnston went for the tickets, the others sat in the waiting-room that seemed so big, compared to the bit of a one at Todd's Ferry, and watched people rushing for trains or hurrying from them to their work, or sitting on the high-backed settles like themselves, waiting for friends. At the circular booth in the center of the room, a man was unpacking lovely roses and violets from a long brown box; Francis bought a rose for Miss Margaret, and Timothy strolled to another booth and bought a magazine, " to read on

the train," he said. And then Mr. Johnston came back, beckoning to them, and they picked up their grips and hurried out into the train-shed.

They were quite a party, and their six seats were all together on one side of the parlor car. The green velvet chairs seemed to swallow up Belle and Trudy. A person walking in the aisle would have thought the chairs empty if it had not been for the chattering that came from them. It wasn't very long before the girls were sitting on one seat.

It did seem as if the train would never start, and as if all the watches had stopped together. But at last they heard the conductor calling, "All aboard," and saw the people on the platform waving their hands to the people in the cars, and felt the jar as the engine began to move. Then the train went faster and faster, and they were on the way to Washington at last!

It was then that they noticed for the first time a fat colored man in a white jacket, who came to Mr. Johnston, smiling, and said, " Everyt'ing all right, sah? Little folks all comfo'ble, sah? " and

heard Mr. Johnston reply, "Everything is fine, thank you, porter."

"Gee," whispered Timothy to Trudy, "there is your Mr. Porter that Amos meant."

All the morning the train rushed on, and they sat looking out of the windows. Cities and towns, villages and country, great factories and little farms whizzed by them; and finally they passed through the great city of New York. But before that there was the dinner. Breakfast in the hotel was not half as much fun as the dinner in the dining-car. The porter went through the aisle, calling in a loud sing-song voice, "Din-ner—is—now—be-ing—served—in—the—din-ing—car!" And Mr. Johnston got up and pulled down his coat and said, "Might as well go in now. I'm hungry."

They followed him through several cars, swaying and lurching against the seats, and sometimes standing flattened against the vestibule walls to let others, who had finished dinner, pass them. The dining-car had little square tables by broad double windows, with heavy high-backed chairs, four to a table. More colored men, in white

suits, passed up and down the car, balancing trays with food or empty dishes. Belle and Trudy and Timothy hardly wanted to eat at first, things were so strange, but Miss Margaret, who sat at the table with them, ordered their dinner. When it came, the train was going very fast indeed, and Timothy said his soup looked like a whirlpool. Belle was afraid to try to find her mouth, but soon they got used to the motion, and thought the dining-car was great fun.

Timothy wished he might stop in Philadelphia to see the Liberty Bell and the Mint, but Mr. Johnston said, "Don't try to do it all at once. You'll have enough to see in Washington; and besides, my Uncle Sam has told me to report at once, and when that gentleman speaks, we must obey."

After Philadelphia, the scenery began to change. There was no more snow, and as they rushed along they saw muddy roads, and a few green leaves on some of the trees. More people were out-of-doors, and just before dark they saw a man ploughing in a field. Then came supper in the dining-car, with the curtains drawn and the

lights lit, and when they went back to their car Mr. Johnston said, "Timothy, you might read your magazine now." For all you could see in the black windows was the reflection of the car lights and the seats and the tired people lying back in their chairs. But Timothy, who had not opened his magazine, shook his head, and said sleepily, "No, I don't feel like reading."

"Everyone take a nap," suggested Miss Margaret. "We shan't reach the city until nearly ten, and the porter will wake us in plenty of time."

"Good old Mr. Porter," murmured Timothy, snuggling down into the big, soft chair.

It seemed only a second before someone was shaking him by the shoulder, and saying, "Wake up, Timothy, almost into Washington."

The word roused him, and he peered out into the darkness, shading his eyes with hands pressed close to the glass. Nothing but the night, with here and there a low street lamp, not as bright as the new electric lights at Todd's Ferry! Now and then a street, dimly lighted, with low houses on either side. Where was the Washington

Monument? Where was the Capitol? Timothy had not imagined that there was anything like these dingy streets and squatty little houses in Washington.

"Brush yo' off, sah?" said a soft voice behind him, and there was the porter, waiting with a big whisk broom. Timothy stood uncertainly in the swaying train, held out his arms, and turned about as the porter brushed his coat. Miss Margaret was putting on her hat, and Belle and Trudy were all ready to leave the train.

With a rattle and jar and bump, the train stopped. Mr. Johnston said, "Well, here we are, come on." And they followed him out of the train, up the long walk, and into the most immense room they had ever seen! On either side, as far as they could see, the great place stretched, and the hundreds of people coming from the trains seemed like little ants. Overhead the roof rose in wonderful arches, and at either end was a beautiful circular window. Why, the waiting-room at the Boston South Station was like a little closet, compared to this. And Mr. Johnston didn't even stop! He only said to the

man who was carrying their grips, "Taxi, please—to K Street."

Miss Margaret said, "We're very proud of our new station. It is larger than the Capitol," and as they came outside, "Look, there is the Capitol now."

They stood perfectly still and looked, saying not a word. Straight ahead of them, in the distance, glowing with a soft creamy light against the dark night, was the Capitol of the United States. The children just drew long breaths and looked and looked. For the first time, they realized that they really had come to Washington. And then, in a few minutes, they were in the taxi, whirling along streets that were not dark like those in the outskirts, and listening to Mr. Johnston, and bobbing their heads from side to side, trying to see everything that he was pointing out to them. "We are on F Street now—there is the Pension Building—Department of the Interior"—and how they stared at the big plain building, for that was where the Santa Claus man had his office—"Down to the left there you can see the Avenue —— Here's

the Treasury Building—there's the White House—State, War and Navy Building—drive down 18th Street, driver—here we are!"

And they stopped craning their necks to look at a large red-brick house on a corner, with two sets of four or five broad, stone steps leading up to its front doors. "It's a double house," explained Mr. Johnston. "We live in this side, and look out on two streets." One of the doors was brightly lighted. There was a large yard, with grass and shrubs, just budding into leaf, and in the windows were long attractive window-boxes.

"Come," said Miss Margaret, happily, "come right in, dears. This is home."

CHAPTER V

WASHINGTON

On the train, Miss Margaret had been telling them a little about her Washington home. "You know," she said, "you will find a good many things different from Todd's Ferry, but I think you will like it all. There won't be the great green fields and high hills, and the houses may seem very close together, but there are plenty of outdoor places and I know you will find enough to keep you busy. I do hope you won't be homesick."

For a minute they had thought she was in earnest, but Belle leaned over and looked in her eyes and saw the twinkle, so she replied, "If we should be homesick, I suppose you could put us on the train and send us home."

"And you must get used to colored people,"

Miss Margaret continued; "our cook is colored; her name is Ardelia, and she is very tall and thin; she has been with us for years and years. We couldn't think of parting with Ardelia."

"Bob is black, too," said Mr. Johnston, turning his chair around, "almost as black as the horses he drives."

"Does Mr. Johnston drive horses?" whispered Belle to Trudy. "Doesn't he have an automobile?"

"I don't think so. I've heard Miss Margaret say he was very proud of his carriage and pair of horses."

With all these things in mind, the children waited eagerly for Ardelia to open the door. They imagined just how she looked.

And then the door swung open, and all they could see was a great expanse of white dress filling the whole doorway, with two black hands stretched out in welcome, and the happiest, jolliest black face, with a smile that was all shining white teeth.

"Why, Susie Pearl!" cried Miss Margaret. "You here? Where's Ardelia?"

"Yas'm, Miss Margaret, I'se heah. Aunt Ardelia, she got word f'um her sister what's sick an' she had to kite right off to Alexand'ia, an' I come over to cook for you-all. I'se right glad to see yo' back. An' here's the chillun—Ardelia tole me about the chillun. Come in, I'se got a nice hot supper fo' you."

They went into a long hall, with wide folding doors opening at either side into square pleasant rooms; the stairs were directly in front.

"Come up-stairs," said Miss Margaret. "Your rooms are on the third floor. Belle and Trudy will have the front one, and the boys can sleep at the back. Brother and I have rooms on the second floor."

Up the long flight of stairs, into another hall like the one below, up the second flight, and there were the rooms where they were to live for weeks and weeks. They did seem so queer. Big rooms with windows set deeply into the walls and inside blinds; "wooden shutters" Susie Pearl called them when she closed them and snapped on the lights.

"Susie Pearl will get you anything you want,"

said Miss Margaret. "Wash quickly and come down-stairs. You will have to get used to running up and down stairs if you live in Washington," she added, laughing.

At first the girls were shy with Susie Pearl, but it was impossible not to make friends. She was so jolly and so interested in everything. "I reckon t'ings is strange to you-all. This the first time yo' ever been in Washin'ton? Well, I nevah been up No'th yet. I don' like the cold weather."

"Oh, you'd love it if you got used to it. We have the greatest sport, skating and sliding, and making maple sugar in the spring ——" Trudy stopped, for just then she saw, instead of the strange room, the new sap-house with its green-stained shingles, the path leading to the wood road, and Mother and Father and Grandmother coming up the path—and she was just going to be homesick when she heard the voice of her Santa Claus man, "Aren't you children ever coming down? I've been into the kitchen, and there are Potomac River oysters swimming in a stew, just longing to be eaten!"

"Oh!" cried Francis. "Oyster stew! I haven't had one for ages."

"Heah's yo' crutches, Master Francis."

"Don't use them much now, Susie. I'm almost well."

After supper they were all too tired to do more than unpack just a bit and tumble into bed. It seemed noisy at first, with the automobiles rushing by, but even the strangeness could not keep them awake.

Early in the morning Belle heard Susie Pearl's voice on the sidewalk.

"Ma goodness, that's shuah a big box. Bring it right in yeah."

She ran to the window, but could only see an express wagon. "Wake up, Trudy," she called. "Look out the window."

They looked out into the bare tree branches. There were trees everywhere, and even now the buds were swelling, although it was not quite the first of March. Across the wide street, bordered with parkings of grass between sidewalk and roadway, was a large apartment house; beside it was a tiny shabby cottage where colored children

played in the cluttery yard; beyond were other fine dwellings. It seemed so odd to see the little house, but later they learned that such cabins were all over Washington, even near the grand embassies; the owners, colored people who had owned the land for years, refused to sell. "Squatters," Mr. Johnston said.

"Isn't it great?" said Trudy. "Let's hurry down-stairs."

They met the boys in the hall. "Listen," shouted Timothy, all excitement, "what do you suppose we can see from our window? The Naval Radio Station at Arlington, and it looks just like the masts of ships at sea. And they have talked with the Eiffel Tower in Paris; Francis says so."

They found Mr. Johnston waiting. In a minute Miss Margaret called from below, "Brother, do you know anything about this box?"

"What box?"

"This box from Todd's Ferry."

That brought them all to the basement. There stood a big wooden box, plainly marked for Mr. Johnston.

"I don't know what it can be," replied the Santa Claus man. "I did not send it."

Francis was looking at Timothy, but Timothy had heard Belle laugh under her breath.

"Open it," he cried. "I'll bet Belle knows about it."

"Open it," said Belle.

And when the cover was off, there were two dozen jars of the exhibit that had won the trip to Washington for Miss Belle Perkins.

"I wanted you to have them," said Belle, "so Father packed them and sent them along as soon as we knew we were coming."

"Look, Susie Pearl," said Miss Margaret. "This little girl made them all herself."

Susie Pearl took them out with cries of admiration.

"And Trudy made lots, too," said Timothy.

"And Timothy here finished her work when she burned her arms and could not do any more," Francis went on eagerly.

"Aw, what did you tell that for?" shouted Timothy, chasing him out the door.

After breakfast, Miss Margaret had a plan.

She would unpack the trunks and get settled, while the children could go to market with Susie Pearl. There would be lots of supplies to buy, and they could each take a basket and bring them home.

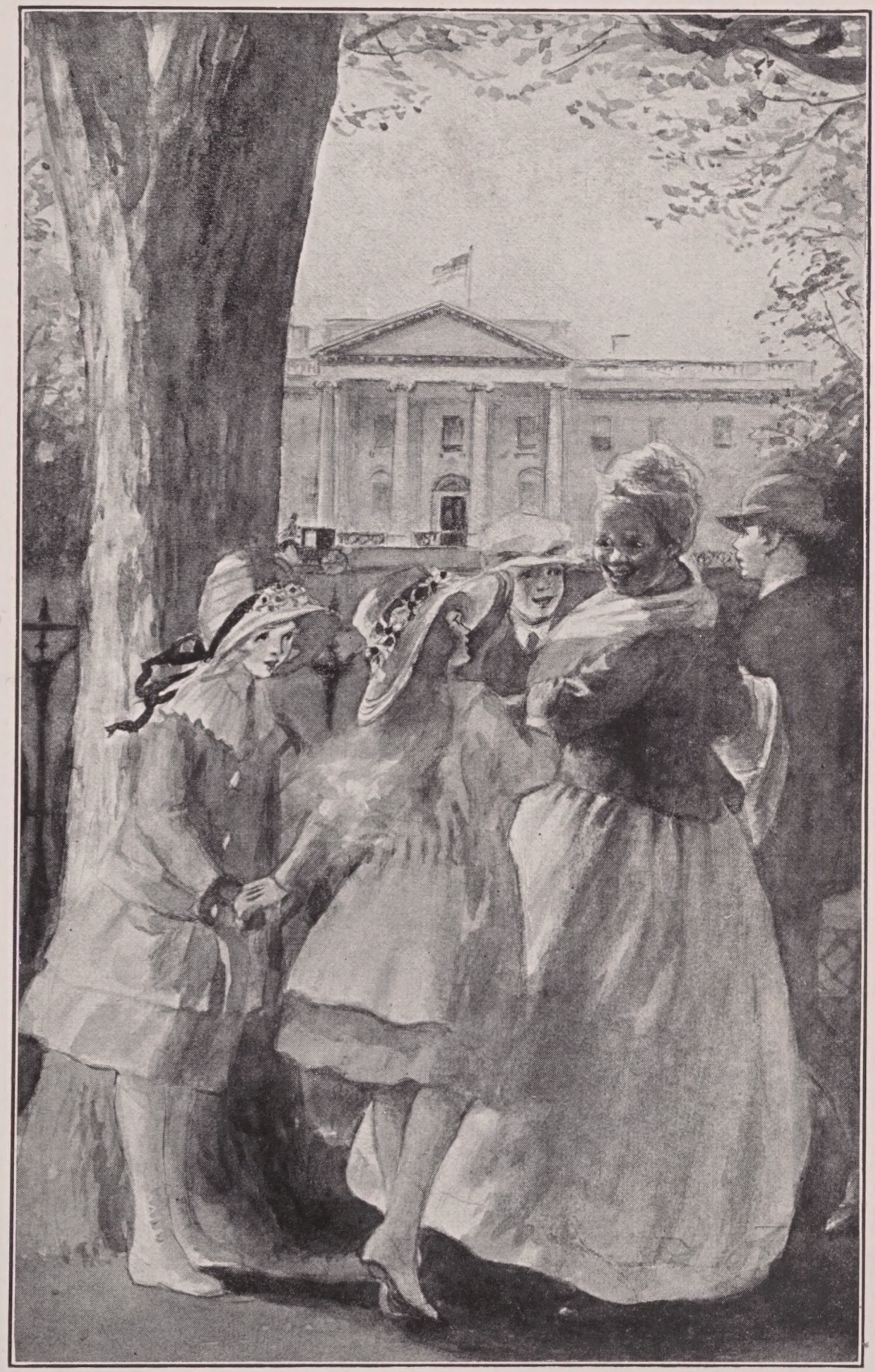
"I have to go to the Bureau of Agriculture," said Mr. Johnston, "but I'll see you at dinner. Take them down through Lafayette Square, Susie, so they can see the White House."

They walked out K Street to a wide street that Susie Pearl said was Connecticut Avenue. "All the Avenues are named fo' states," she told them. "New Hampshire Avenue is only fo' blocks up f'om the house. You can go up there this afternoon if yo' want to."

At the next street they saw a great statue of a man, with four bronze cannon at the corners of the pedestal.

"Admiral Farragut," said Susie Pearl. "See —he's a-holdin' his telescope, just like he used to stan' on the deck of his ship an' look fo' trouble."

But the children had already caught a glimpse of the trees in Lafayette Square and were hurry-



THEY WERE REALLY LOOKING AT THE WHITE HOUSE!

ing ahead. They scampered through the paths, and there, just across the street, was the beautiful White House! They were really looking at the *White House.* There were the high pillars of the portico; there were the long windows; it was just like the picture in the guide-books. "That's the East Room, over that side," whispered Timothy. "Isn't it, Susie Pearl?"

"It sho' is," she answered, staring across at the entrance. "An' yo' see that carriage standin' in front of the do'? See the driver-man with the red, white an' blue cockade on his hat? That's the President's carriage. See those men waitin'? See the folks standin' on the sidewalk? Looks to me mighty like the President goin' come out pretty soon."

"Oh!" gasped the children.

"We'll just cross ovah, and prospect a bit an' see what happens."

They crossed Pennsylvania Avenue, and stood by one of the big gates. Timothy was as quiet as a mouse, but he never took his eyes from the great dark doors. Suddenly they opened, and ——

"There he is!" cried Timothy. "There's the President!"

A stout, pleasant-looking man paused in the doorway a moment, then came down the steps to the waiting carriage. He spoke to the driver. The carriage started toward the gate where the children waited. The stout fair man looked at the people who were watching him; he saw the four children leaning eagerly forward, and then—the pleasantest friendly smile broke over his face. He leaned forward and, as the carriage slowly passed, he lifted his hat and greeted them.

Timothy's cap was off in an instant. Francis raised his hat. The girls bowed shyly. Not one of the children could help returning that friendly smile. Then the carriage was turning into the Avenue, and it was over. They all drew long breaths.

"Where can I buy some postal cards?" Timothy demanded. "I must write to Amos that the President of the United States bowed to me the very first day I was in Washington!"

"Isn't it wonderful, Belle?" said Trudy.

"My knees are just shaking I'm so excited. I never dreamed he'd speak to us, did you?"

"I guess my father will be proud when I tell him about it."

Said Francis, "Perhaps there will be a reception while we are here. Then we could all go, and shake hands with him. But, look at that!"

They looked where he pointed. Up, up, into the clear blue sky, over the feathery branches of the hundreds of budding trees, a white shining shaft rose, tall and graceful.

"The Washington Monument," said Trudy. "Oh, isn't it beautiful!"

"Isn't it high?" Timothy cried. "Let's go up there this afternoon."

"Heah's our car," said Susie Pearl, "an' we-all must get to mahket, or eve'ything will be sold."

They rode down grand Pennsylvania Avenue to Seventh Street and walked to the Market, a great building like three sides of a square, full of little stores, "Stalls," Susie Pearl said they were called, where you could buy meats and fruits and groceries—everything you could

possibly want to eat. And besides the things to eat were the quantities of wonderful flowers. They walked over the sawdust-covered floor, following Susie Pearl who hurried from stall to stall, buying from dealers who seemed to know her and to have exactly what she wanted. Soon their baskets were full of bundles. So many other people were there too, all with their baskets, all marketing and all talking to each other. Susie Pearl said they all came every day.

"Come outside," said Susie at last. "I want to get some things f'om the carts."

Outside the Market, in rickety stalls against the walls, were many colored people, selling the produce of their little farms near by. Their carts, which had brought the goods to market, stood in the cobble-paved street while the horses, unharnessed, rested and ate their breakfast. Some of the people were cooking their own breakfasts over little stoves while others were eating from lunch-baskets.

"Virginia folks what drives in eve'y mawnin'," said Susie Pearl. "Come ovah heah. I got some things ordered f'om this man."

Across the street they could see trees and trees and trees, just beginning to turn green, and grass and long stretches of walks and paths.

"What's that place?" asked Timothy.

"That's the Mall—there's the New National Museum right across. Yo' mus' go in there an' see all the animals what Pres'dent Roosevelt done shoot in Africa and b'ing home for the Government."

"Let's go there this afternoon," said Timothy.

"Let's walk home through the Mall," suggested Trudy.

"Walk—*walk,*" said Susie Pearl in amazement; "I reckon you-all don' know how long these Washington walks are. Nobody walks in Washington 'cept the tourists."

"Well," said Timothy, very decidedly, "I'm going to walk till I find a place to buy post-cards. I'm going to write post-cards this afternoon."

How they all laughed. "Anything else you're planning to do this afternoon, Timothy?" said Francis. "You're going to stay here more than one day, you know."

"Well, I don't want to miss anything."

"Susie," said Francis, "why can't the girls go home with you, and Timothy and I will get some post-cards? I know where we can buy some cheap."

"Get some for us, will you?" said Trudy.

"Sure."

And in a couple of days Mr. McAdam found picture post-cards from Washington in the mail of nearly everyone in Todd's Ferry, telling that the President had bowed to the children. Amos had five and carried them in his coat pocket, showing them at every house on his fish route. And when he got home that night he read them all over again, and then he sat for a long time thinking about his friends so far away from the New Hampshire hills; thinking about the good times they were having; thinking about the maple sugar orchard that he and Father would have all to themselves with no boys and girls to help them.

And suddenly he sighed, and then his eyes began to twinkle, and he laughed and slapped his knee and said, "By George, I'll do it!"

CHAPTER VI

A REMINDER OF TODD'S FERRY

"We haven't seen Donald yet," said Trudy at breakfast next morning.

"I think he will be over to-day," replied Miss Margaret. "His mother telephoned while you were at the market. He is in school now, and quite busy with his studies."

"We must have some of the friends in to meet the children," added Mr. Johnston. "I want them to meet some of our Washington friends."

"I know the postman now. He told me the New Hampshire letters generally come on the afternoon mail."

"Oh, Timothy, do you suppose we will get any letters to-day?"

Belle had sent her mother a postal the day before, and was already looking for an answer. But it was two or three days later before the Todd's Ferry mail came. And wasn't it wel-

come! There were letters from home, and some from the school children, and one card from Amos. He did not like to write letters, but there was quite a good deal of news on the card. It said, in funny crampled, round writing, "Dear Friends: Yr. card rec'd. Thanks. Sap running fine. Lumbermen slaughtering trees. Todd's Ferry very lonely. All well. Yrs. truly, A. Bean."

They showed the postal to Donald when he came, for it was nearly a week before they saw him. Donald was Miss Margaret's and Mr. Johnston's nephew who had spent one summer in Todd's Ferry. He had grown more than Timothy in the year and a half since then. His black hair was still curly but he wore it cut short and was trying to make it smooth and shiny. He was much more interested in his own affairs than in any news from the country, and talked a great deal about his school, and the football team, and his dancing school and the girls he met there.

"I suppose you'll chase all around, and do everything that everybody does who comes to Washington," he said. "If I wasn't so busy, I

could show you lots of things. I'll take you to dancing school some day, but I won't sit outside the Monument with the tourists, or climb to the dome of the Capitol."

"You needn't," said Timothy. "I know where the Monument is, and when you can go up, and how many stairs there are, and I'll take the girls any time they want to go. I asked the policeman at the White House."

"What?"

"Why, Timothy Todd, when did you do that?"

"How did you ever dare speak to him?"

"Well, I've been exploring a little in the neighborhood, and I walked down to see if I could see the President again, and that policeman looked all right so I just asked him if the President would be likely to be going out that morning, and we got to talking, and I told him who I was and where I was staying, and he said he knew Mr. Johnston and then he gave me a lot of information, and said, 'Come and have a chat whenever you're down this way,' and I said I would."

Donald was rather impressed at this, but in a few minutes he said, " I'll take you out to Fort Myer next Friday to see the cavalry drill. I don't have to go to school Friday afternoon, and my father can always get tickets for the drill. It's fun to see the horses."

"Aw, Miss Margaret," Susie Pearl's voice came up the stairs. " There's another box come f'om that Todd's Ferry place. Will I open it? "

Timothy was down the stairs, three at a time. Francis was not far behind him. Donald dragged slowly after the others. He would not admit that he cared anything about the box, but really he was curious to see what might be in it.

There it stood, in the lower hall, a square wooden box, addressed to Mr. Johnston and marked, " From A. Bean, Todd's Ferry, N. H."

" Oh," cried Belle, " look on the side. It's one of Mr. McAdam's boxes. It came from the store. What do you suppose it is? "

Susie Pearl came from the kitchen with a hammer and a chisel, and the boys made short work of cover and nails. Under a layer of newspapers

were two tin pails and two oblong cans, but even before they were visible the children had sniffed the contents ——

"Maple sugar—maple syrup ——"

"Good for Amos! He's all right!"

"From the new sap-house, I'll bet."

"Oh, goody-goody, there, aren't you glad you're here, Donald?"

"Get some dishes, Susie Pearl," said Miss Margaret. "We'll all have a taste, this very minute."

They were so busy and excited they did not hear Mr. Johnston's key in the door, or his footsteps on the stairs. He stood in the dining-room door, watching them. And then he clapped his hands.

"My party!" he said. "Just in time for my party. I shall now give a sugar party right here in Washington. I know you have all been thinking about Mr. Turner's maple sugar party, and wishing you were there, but a sugar party in Washington, D. C., will be much more original. I believe Amos sent this on purpose so we could have one. We'll ask the New Hampshire Club,

Margaret, and have a real, honest-to-goodness good time."

"You can't have sugar-cakes on the snow," objected Timothy, "because there isn't any snow. The policeman told me there hadn't been much this season, and it was too late for any more."

"My Santa Claus man can do anything," said Trudy, running over to hug him.

"Good for you," he said. "Santa Claus ought to be able to make snow if anyone can, especially when his friend Jack Frost sends him the sugar for the cakes."

So the invitations went out for a maple sugar party at the Johnston house, and the Washington people accepted as gladly as the people of Todd's Ferry. Everyone came who possibly could, and Donald was the first one there. Grown folks and children—people from New Hampshire who were living in Washington—came; they were all glad to see the children from Todd's Ferry, and asked all kinds of questions. Soon everyone was chattering with his neighbor. Timothy did not hear Mr. Johnston when he greeted a very tall man with a long, scraggly white beard and keen

blue eyes. The man was shaking hands with the guests when Trudy noticed him.

"Oh, who is that tall man?" she said.

"He's somebody," answered Donald, "but I forget who. I've seen him at the Capitol."

Timothy turned. "That's our Representative," he said. "I saw him at the hotel in Concord when I went with Grandfather to put my money in the bank. They call him 'The Tall Pine of New Hampshire'—and see that man just coming in? He's our Senator."

Another man was greeting Miss Margaret. He was large too, but more carefully dressed, and very courteous and polite.

"Goodness," whispered Belle, "the Santa Claus man knows some pretty important people, doesn't he?"

"I guess he does," said Francis. "He quite often goes to the White House to see the President."

"Trudy," called Mr. Johnston, who was talking to a group of men clustered about the Senator, "come over here. Bring Belle and Timothy. I want you."

"Senator," he said, "these are the children from Todd's Ferry of whom I was speaking; they all three won this trip to Washington by excellence in canning and preserving, and they are pretty good little citizens, on the whole."

"I should say so," agreed the Senator. "I wonder if they wouldn't be interested in seeing the Senate. I shall be pleased to send them cards to the Members' Gallery."

"I know what you're up to," laughed Mr. Johnston, as the Senator wrote the children's names in his note-book. "You want to get them to vote for you when they're grown up."

"We New Hampshire people must stand by each other." And to the children he said, "You keep up your interest in Todd's Ferry, and I promise to help you whenever I can."

"Oh," exclaimed Timothy, "you'd better not say that if you don't mean it, because there's lots of improvements needed in the town, my grandfather says."

"Let me know what they are. I'm not a bit frightened," the Senator called back as he went out to get some maple sugar. For Mr. Johnston

was inviting his guests down to the kitchen, where Susie Pearl, in a spick and span white dress, stood stirring something on the stove. She was so fat that she hid the kettles and most of the stove, but the New Hampshire folks just sniffed —and sniffed again—and said, " Oh, this year's maple syrup! " and crowded about the stove.

And then Mr. Johnston and the men and boys went out in the back hall and came back with pans of cracked ice—one for each person. They filed back into the dining-room, and Trudy and Belle passed about forks and spoons, just as they did at Mr. Turner's party in the woods, only instead of dropping the hot syrup into fresh-fallen snow under great bare trees, they dropped it into the cracked ice, and then picked the sticky cakes out with their forks. It was all new to Francis and Donald, but they did not seem to need much instruction. There were doughnuts to eat, too, and hot coffee. When no one could make another cake, Mr. Johnston said, " Shall we go into the living-room? " but the answer was " No, let's stay here—it's so cozy." They all helped clear away the dishes while the men talked, and some

of the ladies said, "We will help Susie Pearl," and the children helped too, so that really this was the best of the whole party.

They wrote a family letter to Amos telling him what a wonderful time they had with his syrup and sugar; each person wrote a page, so he had a long letter to show in Todd's Ferry. But he only sent a card in reply, as short as the other.

Mr. Johnston had decided he was getting rather fat, so instead of driving to the Department of the Interior, where he had his office, he walked, and Timothy and Francis formed the habit of walking part way with him. They always went through Lafayette Square, and usually stopped at the White House gate on the way back for a chat with the policeman.

One day they came racing home in great excitement. "Hurry, girls, and come with us. We can go into the White House this morning. Our policeman says there's a big party going through, and we'd better be there."

He was waiting for them. Timothy introduced the girls. "Go right around to the east door," he said, "and follow the crowd. Oh, and

when you get a chance give this note to the guide."

The girls thought Timothy was only doing an errand for his friend, but they did not see Francis wink, nor Timothy solemnly wink back.

They went into the basement corridor, pressing as close as they could to the man who was acting as guide.

"The portraits on this corridor," he was saying to the tourists, "are those of the ladies who have ruled at the White House. If you will follow me up-stairs, we will now visit the East Room, used for State receptions. Notice, please, the gold piano, which cost fifteen thousand dollars, and the crystal chandeliers."

In the immense East Room, the children wandered and admired everything. From their guide-books they were able to look for the things they preferred—the wonderful ceiling of white and gold, the gold-colored velvet draperies at the long windows, the huge China vases and the brocaded seats at the sides of the room. And the floor—so smooth that they were almost afraid to step on it.

Timothy watched his chance, and slipped the note into the guide's hand. "Oh, yes," whispered the man. "You wait in the corridor a minute after the rest go. I'll fix it."

"Wait here after the tourists go," whispered Timothy to the mystified Trudy and Belle.

As the crowd of sight-seers disappeared down the broad staircase, a man, summoned by the guide, approached the children. "Come with me," he said, smiling pleasantly; "you have permission to see the other rooms in the building."

"Oh, thank you," gasped Trudy, remembering her manners at the last minute, just as the man opened the doors of gorgeous stained glass that shut the rest of the White House away from the entrance hall. And then they were walking *into* the White House! Really walking where the President and his family walked; they were seeing the Blue Room with its oval walls covered with blue corded silk instead of wall-paper; the Red Room where red velvet made wall coverings and draperies. Here the man turned to the girls, saying, "Come over and look in this cabinet. Girls like these things." And there were seven

Japanese dolls, beautifully dressed, that he said had been presented to Mrs. Roosevelt by the Japanese Minister. Trudy liked the Green Room best, but the State Dining-Room was wonderful, with its huge table that would seat one hundred guests. In every room were beautiful chandeliers, and so many lovely pieces of furniture, ornaments, china and glass that it was almost impossible to remember them all.

"The President's Room and the Cabinet Room are in the wing, in the Executive Office," explained their guide. "I'm sorry you can't see them, but the President is having a meeting there, and ——"

"Well!" interrupted Timothy, "I feel as if I'd been visiting him all the morning. I think it was just great of you to show us all around like this."

"Yes," added Belle. "We certainly do thank you."

"Oh, that's all right," said the man. "I've enjoyed it myself."

Outside the policeman was waiting for them. "Did you deliver my note?" he said.

And how they talked. "Well," he said, "I'm glad you were pleased. If I should ever come to the country, no doubt there would be lots of things you could show me."

Miss Margaret had been busy, but now the house was all settled, everything running smoothly, and she proposed some really truly sight-seeing. "Just as if we were tourists," she said. "You may decide what you want to see, and I'll be the guide. We will get lunch down town, and make regular days of it. We will go every other day, and that will give you time to rest and write up your journals."

For each of the children was keeping a journal of the Washington trip. Each had bought a blank book as soon as he arrived. Trudy and Belle were illustrating theirs with post-cards, but Timothy was taking snap-shots for his, and leaving places for them as he went along. Francis was writing more about Trudy and Timothy and Belle and the good times he was able to have with them, than about the sights of Washington. He was going to send his journal to his father and mother, in far-away Armenia. Belle was buy-

ing post-cards of everything she saw, and sending them home to her father.

"You know," she explained, "Pa's great on collections. He gave me some money to use for cards. Pa has a collection of postage stamps, and evenings he gets them out and enjoys looking them over. He's going to buy a special book for this Washington collection, and I'm going to write something in it about each card."

CHAPTER VII

SIGHT-SEEING

NEXT day they started on a real sight-seeing trip. "We'll begin at the Monument," said Miss Margaret. "The first elevator goes up at nine, and that will give us a nice early start."

"I've been up the Monument three times," said Timothy, "so I can show you all the points of interest from the top."

"Then we will go into the National Museum."

"And the Fish Commission, and the Capitol, and the Congressional Library!"

The children had not yet visited many of the public buildings, but they had taken many drives with Bob and the pair of black horses; leisurely drives about this wonderful city of trees which were so swiftly putting forth little green leaves every day. Bob had shown them lovely vistas of streets and parks, stopping the horses and letting

the children look as long as they wished. He had pointed out the different legations, many of them with porticos over the doors. "And what do you think," Francis had said, " the ground under those porticos is just the same as if it were really in the foreign countries. If somebody was escaping and ran under the portico, it would be just the same as if he had gone to China, or England, or Spain; that is, if he belonged to that country. He could claim his country's protection."

They had looked wonderingly at the little patch of pavement that did not seem any different from the sidewalk about it.

They had driven out to lovely Arlington, and walked soberly between the rows and rows of soldiers' graves; they had stood on the steps of the Mansion between the massive pillars, and watched, across the Potomac, the Monument, white and shining in the sun. They had been getting acquainted with Washington.

So, to-day, they all started briskly for the Monument. They found a large party of tourists sitting on the benches about the base, waiting

for the elevator, while others walked about, looking at their guide-books and making notes in little books or taking snap-shots with all kinds of cameras. Soon they were in the elevator with its barred sides, riding slowly up—up—up, while every few minutes they could see through the openings great white figures painted on the framework that told how high they were. "Two hundred feet—three hundred fifty feet——" The girls gasped. And then they were out in the corridor, waiting their chance to lean on the deep-silled windows, and look at the trees so far below that they seemed like thin, green moss, at the people like specks, and at automobiles and cars like tiny toys. Miss Margaret and Francis went down in the elevator, but the children walked down the short flights of stairs, broken by landings where they saw memorial stones set in the walls by different States and organizations. "Needn't bother to count the steps," Timothy said carelessly. "There's nine hundred, just as the guide-book says. I've counted them."

From the Monument they walked through the Agricultural Grounds and the grounds of the

Smithsonian Institute. They looked at the great red building, with its nine towers, with much interest when Miss Margaret explained to them that here was the Department which was trying all the time to learn more about every kind of human knowledge; that sent men to the far corners of the earth to study people and animals, earthquakes, and sun and stars; and that the building itself had been given to the United States by an Englishman, James Smithson, who never saw America, but who wanted to help Americans to greater and better knowledge.

" We will go in some day and see the collection of birds and butterflies," she told them, " but now come over to the New National Museum. There is something there the boys will like. Girls, too, I hope. I like it tremendously myself."

In the New National Museum, so different from the older one, with its shining white walls and pillars, Miss Margaret walked swiftly from room to room until at a certain place she stopped, saying, " Go right ahead."

Timothy hurried on—then stopped suddenly. Belle screamed, then clapped her hand over her

mouth, shrinking back by Miss Margaret; in a moment they went on again, but still half-afraid, for facing them and staring directly at them with fierce green eyes, was a mighty lion, standing on a sandy hillock, and protecting the lioness who crouched before him, drinking eagerly from the water-hole. Another lioness lay with outstretched paws, and two cubs sat watching behind their mother.

"My goodness," breathed Belle, "I thought they were real!"

Timothy walked forward to touch them, but his hand came in contact with clear, invisible plate glass. And then they noticed the other groups; the deer, and the great square-lipped rhinoceros, feeding on grass that seemed as if it must be growing in real earth, each group so marvellously arranged that it was almost impossible to believe that you were not looking at live animals.

"This is the Roosevelt collection that Susie Pearl told us about," said Trudy. "Isn't it, Miss Margaret?"

"Yes, and I love it. And some day we will

go to the Zoo and see real animals. Oh, I want to show you my polar bear."

They ate their lunch in the park, and then Miss Margaret said, " Brother wants me to bring you to the office. We'll take the Seventh Street car and go up there now."

On the steps of the ugly, plain building the Santa Claus man was watching for them.

" Not much of a place to look at on the outside," he said, " but to my mind there's no more important building in the United States. Perhaps I'm prejudiced because I'm so interested in the work, but come and see anyway. This building is a good deal like Grandmother's attic—you can find almost anything you want here. But the thing I'm going to show you is how Uncle Sam—Uncle Sam, U. S. A., not Uncle Sammy Todd, Timothy—takes care of his wood-lot."

As they walked through the corridors and rooms, he continued, " You know that there is a great deal of land owned by the Government in each State, but most of it is in the West. This land is called the public domain. In 1891 Congress passed a law allowing the President to set

aside some of this land as forest reservations. A good deal of valuable land has been sold very cheaply, but after awhile the Government waked up to the fact that forests were not going to last forever, unless they had help. And people had used the public domain as if the land belonged to them; some had cut timber, others had put cattle and sheep out to graze, and when this land was taken by the Government they were angry. But President Roosevelt—and you've just seen the animals he brought from Africa, haven't you?—devoted a great deal of time and thought to the forestry question, and took enormous tracts of land for reservations. Now the Department of National Parks keeps pretty busy taking care of these tracts, and I'm helping as best I can."

"Are there any in New Hampshire?" demanded Timothy.

"Part of the White Mountains is a government reservation."

"Any in Todd's Ferry?"

"No."

"Oh!"

"Here we are," said Mr. Johnston proudly, opening a door. "Walk in."

The clerks in the room looked up with welcoming smiles. They seemed as glad to see Mr. Johnston as ever were the people in Todd's Ferry to greet their Santa Claus man.

"Come, friends," he called to them. "Come and meet the delegation from Todd's Ferry, New Hampshire."

The clerks came to greet the children. "The little friends I've talked so much about," he said, "moth-destroyers, canners, preservers, tree enthusiasts,—just show them everything."

So, with one and another of the men and women who worked with Mr. Johnston for the whole United States, Trudy and Timothy and Belle, from the little village of Todd's Ferry, learned something about the great, beautiful National Forests. They saw wonderful photographs of the giant California redwoods; they exclaimed over the lovely lakes in Glacier Park; they saw the waterfalls and the boiling geysers; they saw photographs of rolling smoke that meant that hundreds and thousands of trees were

burning through the carelessness of someone who did not know how to camp in the woods; they saw, too, many scenes in the lives of forest rangers who guard the great areas of woodland.

"Trudy," exclaimed Timothy, "that's like the man on our mountain. There's one on the top of the mountain near us," he explained to the woman who was showing the pictures. "He stays there all summer. I've been up and seen him. He has a map in a glass case. Our mountain is pretty fine, even if it isn't so big. You can see twenty-three lakes from the top of it, only some of them are just little ponds."

"Know this picture?" said Mr. Johnston, picking up an unmounted photograph.

"I guess I do," replied Trudy. "My tall, tall trees. I love them best, because they're ours."

"Is that one of Mr. Blake's pictures?" asked Francis. "Is he here now?"

"Yes, and he's coming out to see you to-morrow night."

"Oh, good!"

It was all so fascinating that they hated to

leave, but Miss Margaret and the girls had some errands to do, so they said good-bye. Timothy had stayed behind to get some leaflets about the work that he wanted to send to Grandfather. Suddenly he had an idea.

"Have you a good supply of these?" he asked the clerk who was getting them.

"Plenty of them—why?"

"Well, you see, there's a man in Todd's Ferry who doesn't know much about trees. He thinks they're just wood, and only good to sell or burn or things like that. He's Belle's father, and he drives the stage, and he's selling off his wood something awful. I thought if you would be willing to send him some of these leaflets that tell how much good trees do, and what the Government is doing to save them, perhaps he'd stop. And he's crazy about collections, so perhaps Belle could get him to make a collection of your things. Could you send him enough to start a collection? I'd do it, only I think he'd be more pleased to have them come from Washington. He always saves the envelope his Government Seeds come in."

"I'll do that little thing for you," said the clerk. "I'd be very glad to. And I'll send you some from time to time, when there's anything interesting. What's your address?"

"Timothy Todd, Todd's Ferry, New Hampshire—no street and number; and his is Cephas Perkins, same town and State."

So Mr. Perkins began to receive square brown envelopes, with no stamp on them, from Washington, and what is more important, he began to read the leaflets that were inside the envelopes. Belle wrote him about the visit to the Bureau of Public Parks, and said she had some lovely postcards of some of the parks for him. He began to be interested, but he never thought that a little place like Todd's Ferry or the trees that grew there were important enough to bother about.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOREST RANGER

It was on a Tuesday evening, at just ten minutes before eight, that the Forest Ranger came. Timothy knew the exact time, for he was looking at the silver watch that Grandfather had given him the morning before he started for Washington. Afterwards, they all wrote it in their journals, just alike—"On Tuesday evening, at ten minutes before eight, the Forest Ranger came to see us."

They were expecting Stanley Blake when the door-bell rang. They heard Susie Pearl come up the stairs and open the door. They heard her cry, "Why, bress ma soul, Mistah Abbott! Wha you cum f'om? I 'lowed you was out in the woods, somewheres, livin' in a cave, like a b'ar—there now, stop yo' nonsense, an' run along in; de folks'll be mighty glad to see yo'."

And then they heard a strange voice that said, "I declare, Susie Pearl, you're fatter than ever.

I can't reach all the way around when I hug you." And a hearty laugh that made them all smile, and quick footsteps that came along the hall, and then Mr. Johnston and Miss Margaret were at the door, saying, "Why, Abbott! What a surprise. When did you get back?"

He stood in the doorway. A tall, lean young man, with blue eyes, and smooth light hair that grew thick above the tan of his wide forehead. He looked just like any other young man. If you hadn't heard what Susie Pearl said about living in a cave, you would not have thought much about him, except to hope that he was going to be a friend. But now, just as the children were all wondering who Abbott could be, Stanley Blake followed him into the room.

Abbott was shaking hands with Miss Margaret and Mr. Johnston, and they were chatting when Stanley seized Abbott's elbow.

"Come on over and meet my friends," he said. "Ladies and gentlemen from Todd's Ferry, meet my cousin, Abbott Kimball. He's a Forest Ranger, and he's just arrived from Lassen National Forest, in California."

California! Lassen National Forest! Not just names on a map any more, but something real. Here was a man who had lived there.

"Gee!" said Timothy, "Lassen? That's a volcano. With smoke coming out of the top of it. The only active volcano in America, except the ones way up in Alaska. We saw a picture of it at Mr. Johnston's office. Mr. Kimball, did you stay right on the volcano? Does it smoke all the time? What color is the smoke? Does the volcano have real eruptions, with lava and scalding hot stones flying out of it?"

Abbott Kimball laughed again. "Not all the time. In fact, it is a very well-behaved volcano. It never scalded me once."

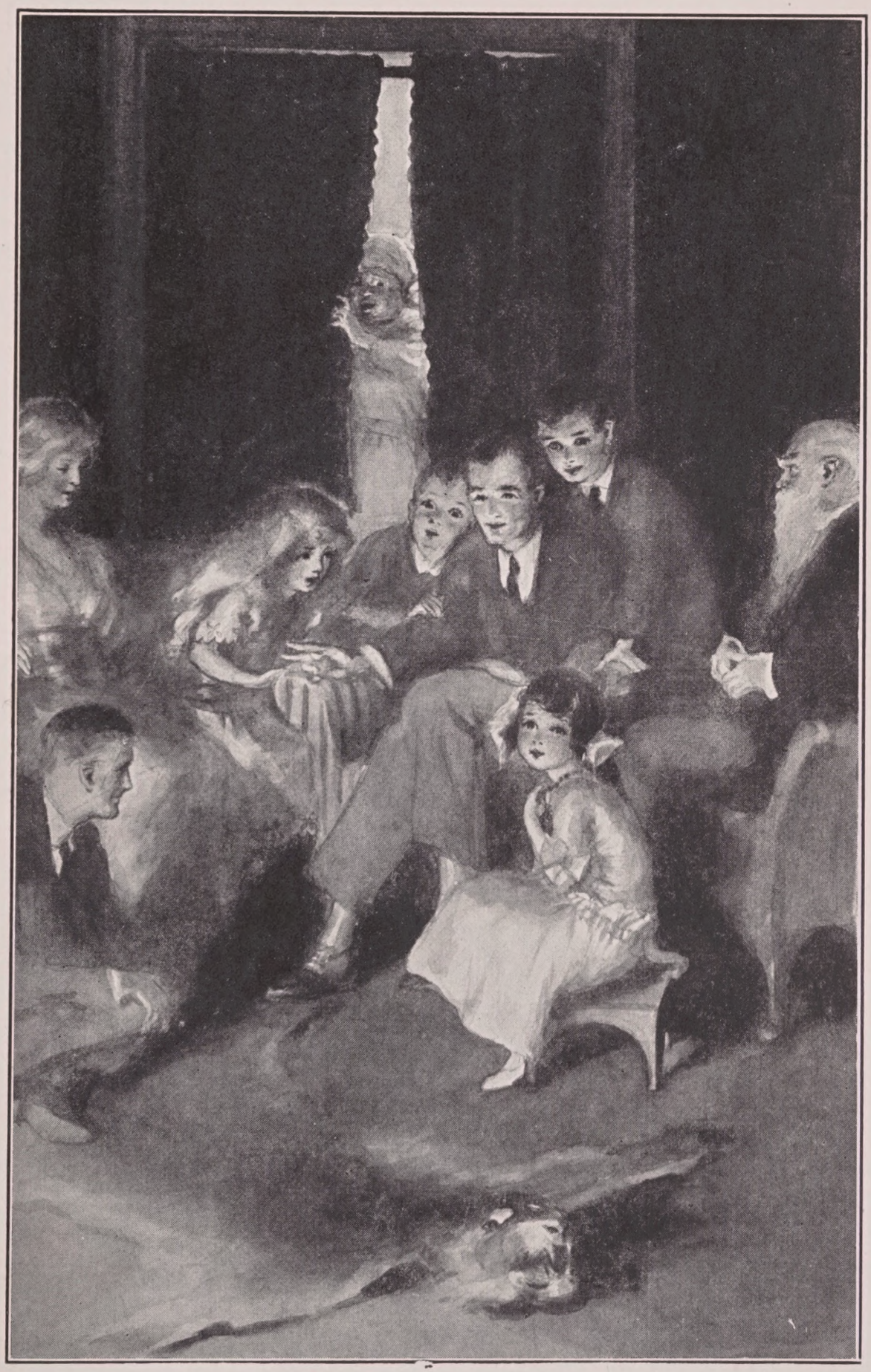
"You've got your work cut out for you, Abbott," said Mr. Johnston. "These children will keep you busy answering questions for one good while. They know a bit about woods and Government work themselves. They earned this trip to Washington by winning a Government canning contest."

"The girls did!" Timothy hurried to correct

him. "I earned my trip acting in moving pictures for Stanley."

And then it had to be all explained while they learned each other's names and got acquainted. Abbott heard about Todd's Ferry, and the squirrel that had introduced Stanley Blake to the boys; he heard the story of the moving picture, but he was most interested in Aunt Theresy's big pines.

"Oh, they must never be cut for timber," he said. "Trees like that should be preserved for the education and the pleasure of all the people." And he told them of the big trees in California, with their tiny little cones, out of all proportion; of Mount Shasta, whose name is the Indian word for purity, snow-covered and all dazzling white, while close beside it rises Black Butte, the tall dingy cone-shaped mountain that is thought to be made of cinders thrown out by Shasta in the long-ago years when she was a raging, seething, active volcano. He told of long trips through the forest; of waterfalls that leap down the sides of mighty mountains; of camping beside glacial streams; of packing burros; of the grand and



HE TOLD THEM OF THE BIG TREES IN CALIFORNIA

lovely sunsets that shed their colors on rocky mountain peaks that tower to the clouds themselves; of the wonderful ruby afterglow that comes like a miracle and makes you hold your breath with happiness; and then it was twelve o'clock.

Timothy looked at his watch again. No one could believe it.

"You'll never let me come again," laughed Abbott as he said good-night.

"Just try it and see," said Miss Margaret. "The only difficulty you will have will be to get away when you do come. Look at those children."

Their eyes were shining. They clung close to the man who had shown them glimpses of the great world; who had made places known only in pictures as real as their own familiar Todd's Ferry; who had opened for them the doors to nature's marvels, and they said, "Oh, when will you come back?"

"Oh, I'll be in Washington for some time. You'll see plenty of me. I'm on a furlough now, and don't know where I shall be sent next.

While I'm here, we'll have some good times together, if you like."

Timothy pulled Stanley aside. "Stanley," he said, looking very stern, "why didn't you ever tell us about him before? I never knew you had a cousin who was a Forest Ranger!"

"Why, I guess I must have forgotten all about him. You see, he's been West five years, and I've been pretty busy."

"You couldn't forget him. Nobody could forget the things that he does."

"To tell you the truth, Timothy, I never thought to mention him while I was in Todd's Ferry, there was so much going on with the pictures and all, and when you came here and he wrote he was coming back, I saved him for a surprise. You see, I thought you'd like him."

After that there were wonderful days with Abbott. Sometimes Miss Margaret went with them, and sometimes he took the children alone. They avoided the tourists and went their own way. There was the trip to Mount Vernon, where they saw the beautiful home of George

Washington. Who but Abbott would have told them of Washington's trips through the forests when he was a surveyor? And what guide could have made them see the river as it looked with its thickly wooded banks when George Washington's great-grandfather bought the plantation that was then only a woodland with a tiny cabin here and there, and wild animals roving through the woods at night? Yet Abbott would never have noticed that the corner of the bedroom door was cut away, making a curving little opening where kitty could come and go, if Trudy hadn't showed it to him.

They spent a forenoon in the Fish Commission building watching the queer little sea-horses and the brilliant fish in their glass cases. They saw the millions of eggs, and the tiny fish hatched from them, while Abbott told them of the great salmon that climb the swift western rivers from the sea, to lay their eggs where nature can best protect them; and told them, too, how the Government protects its fish all through the great National Parks. They learned so many things that the journals would not hold them all, and

Francis had to buy extra books for the whole party.

And as they walked or rode about the city, where now the trees were thick dark green, Abbott taught them the names of the different trees. And he also taught them some of the ways of caring for trees; he told of the men who, working for Uncle Sam as Mr. Johnston and Stanley did, went into the deep forests, measuring trees, deciding what should be cut out to give room for others to grow; which should be cut for timber; where certain kinds would grow best; planning all the time to keep the Parks in perfect condition for the people of the United States, that never should their land be without trees.

"For," he told them one day, as they sat on the banks of the Potomac at Great Falls and watched the waters whirling, dashing, rushing over the great rocks, "if you have no trees, you have nothing. In some countries men who knew no better have cut down all the trees and sold them for the money they would bring. And what happened? The rains came and beat upon the bare earth and made it hard as stone; the

brooks and rivers overflowed on this hard earth, and rushed into the valleys, carrying rocks, gravel and dirt down onto the fertile fields so that never again could they bear crops. And then, later, the sun dried up the streams that had run mills, and the mills fell to pieces. Whole towns and villages went out of existence because the streams and rivers were no longer there."

"You hear that, Belle Perkins," warned Timothy. "And you tell your father what a Forest Ranger says. Because he knows, and something has got to be done to stop your father from selling off all his woodland. I just wish you could see Amos. He feels just the way you do about trees," he said to Abbott.

Abbott knew by this time who Amos was, so he said very earnestly, "I surely hope I shall meet him some day. You know I'm getting pretty fond of Todd's Ferry. If it is all as good as the sample that came to Washington, I think I could be contented there quite awhile."

"Oh, will you come up to see us?" begged Belle. "If you would only come up there and talk the way you do to us ——"

"They would run me out of town," he laughed. "They would say I was an awful bore."

"Aunt Theresy wouldn't run you out of town," said Trudy. "She would show you her trees. Nobody would run you out of town. They would ask you to lecture in the Town Hall."

"I shan't come, then," he declared. "I'm no lecturer."

One day they took him to the Senate, and he sat in the gallery with them and heard the Senator from New Hampshire speak on improvements. "That man knows something," he said. "Who is he?"

And wasn't Timothy proud to be able to say, "That is our Senator from New Hampshire. He came to Mr. Johnston's sugar party, and we met him there. He gave us our tickets to the gallery. I'll introduce you to him if we see him."

In the corridor they did meet him, and Timothy introduced Abbott. The Senator was interested, and they began talking about forestry, but they talked about subjects that the children could not understand, so they wandered away to wait. When Abbott found them again, he said,

"I may come to New Hampshire after all. The Senator is a member of the Forestry Association, and he wants some points from me. It wouldn't be so very strange if you did see me in Todd's Ferry some day."

Somehow something was bringing up Todd's Ferry nearly every day now. There were the presents to buy for all the people at home; and the flowers that bloomed in the parks made them think of the gardens that Father would be spading and Mother would be planting; they saw one party of tourists with badges that said "New Hampshire"; there were letters from home telling of the spring ploughing, and of the trailing arbutus that Father had picked for Aunt Theresy; and there were cards from Amos. They all formed the habit of saying, "When we get home again we must do ——" Oh, there were so many things to do when they got home. And still there were so many things to do in Washington.

So Abbott took them to Harper's Ferry and they stood on the corduroy bridge of logs, with cracks through which they could see the river

raging white and angry far below; they paid the toll fee and walked into West Virginia; they saw the John Brown monument, and bought post-cards to send home and to put in their journals; they ate their lunch on the river banks where they could watch the muddy river and the clear blue one that rushed from the hills together and swept along so fast that the waters could not mingle but flowed side by side for a long distance, in the mad race to escape through the only opening in the encircling hills. And while they were there, watching the rivers, they were seeing in their minds the little creek at Todd's Ferry flowing into the lake, and the lily pads way under the still water, growing—growing—on the long, strong stems. They thought of the bridge over the creek where Amos had shown them the miracle.

No one said out loud yet what was in the mind of each, but they talked more and more about Todd's Ferry and what they would do when they were home again.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE ZOO

"My big brother is going to take me to the Zoo," said Miss Margaret one evening as they were sitting around the table, reading and writing. "He's going to let me stay all day, and we're going to have one of Susie Pearl's nice lunches, and eat all we can, and give the rest to bears and monkeys and birds. My big brother is a kind man, and he will take anybody else who wants to go, I think. That is, if anyone would like to go."

"She's joking," explained Timothy to Belle, who looked rather bewildered. "She doesn't really mean all that about our liking to go. She knows we wouldn't miss it for anything."

"Oh," said Belle, relieved, "I want to go. I want to see the animals."

"These will be real animals," said Francis. "You remember that, Timothy, and don't try to pat them, the way you did the Roosevelt lions."

"Huh," replied Timothy, "you can't fool me twice!"

So it happened that one lovely April morning the whole party came down the broad stone steps, carrying bundles of lunch, thermos bottles, cameras, post-cards, and fountain pens to write home from the Zoo and tell their adventures. They walked up to the Connecticut Avenue car, and as it stopped for them a voice called, "Come up here. I have some nice seats for you." And there was Abbott, with a box of lunch too.

"Oh, hello!" cried Timothy. "I didn't know you were going. I'll sit here by you, and you can tell me again about the burro that fell down the mountain and got stuck between two boulders."

"Did you know Abbott was going?" Belle asked Trudy.

"No, but I think the grown-ups did—they were not a bit surprised."

All the way out to the Zoo the children listened to the stories of the Forest Ranger; he told them of long trips through forests where trails were faint, and where the way was so rough that only

the sure-footed little burros could travel; of tents pitched by rushing streams and meals cooked over the camp-fires; of bread made with only a knife to mix it, and baked on a stick over the blaze; of bears that crept up to the camp, hunting for the bacon that sizzled in the frying-pan and smelled so tempting. They forgot that they were on an electric car in Washington, and when they reached the entrance to the Zoo, and walked along the road that wound between wooded slopes rising on either side, it really seemed as if they were in the great forest. There were no other tourists in sight, and no sound but the songs of the birds flying from tree to tree. They were looking up the hill, trying to see a bird, when Timothy spied the *creature!*

He was coming down the grassy slope between the trees—well, not rapidly, but altogether too fast. He was coming directly at them! Timothy could not tell his head from his tail except as he moved toward them, but of course there must be a head somewhere under that shaggy mat of hair that covered the tremendous beast from end to end, and hung down and trailed on the

ground. And there was no fence to be seen between him and—everybody!

"Stop!" whispered Timothy. "Turn round and go back as fast as you can! Perhaps he hasn't seen us yet. Don't run, but walk awful fast!"

And then Belle and Trudy saw him too. They turned as white as Timothy. But before they could speak, before they could even turn, Miss Margaret had seen him and was laughing.

"Bless his heart, here's the yak!" she cried. "He always comes down to meet his visitors. Isn't he the loveliest buffalo robe you ever saw walking about? You can't tell which way he's facing till he moves."

"But," objected Timothy, "is he tame? How near you does he come?"

"Only to the fence."

"I don't see any fence."

"It's wire, Timothy," said Francis, "right there by those bushes. There are lots of wire fences here. It makes the animals seem more natural, and as if they were really free."

Timothy was rather disturbed at being fooled

again, but forgot it when Mr. Johnston said to Abbott, "What time do they unload?"

"Not until two o'clock."

He wondered what was going to be unloaded, and where, but nothing more was said, and soon they were in the lion houses. Here were real lions and lionesses, tremendous cats which lay on their sides and purred tremendous purrs, and washed their faces with tremendous paws that would tear you to pieces if they could reach beyond the steel bars. At the back of each cage was a little, low door that led into the yard, for every lion had a little yard to play in, and a stump of a tree, dead and worn smooth where the lion had lain stretched along it in the sun, with one branch torn to ribbons where he had sharpened his wicked claws; you could walk out behind the lion house and watch them in the yards.

And what fun it was in the monkey-house, and how noisy! All the monkeys were chattering, and clinging to the bars and holding out their arms for peanuts, and catching them in their little hands that looked like tiny human hands.

They stood watching the orang-outang who sat

huddled in the corner of his cage and seemed like an old, bearded man. He was looking at them, playing with the sawdust on the floor. They talked to him, and he seemed to listen, half-closing his eyes and bending his head.

"Nice old orang-outang," said Francis, "I wonder what he thinks." Belle and Trudy crowded nearer the cage. Nice old orang-outang slowly gathered a handful of sawdust from the floor and suddenly rose to his feet. Whish! Out shot his long arm, and over the children fell the sawdust. And nice old orang-outang turned his back!

"Well!" exclaimed Timothy, "I guess we don't want any more of him."

"Come out to the bear-pits," said Miss Margaret. "After we have seen the bears we'll find some settees and have our lunch. Susie Pearl has made us a loaf of frosted cake."

They found a place to eat their lunch and watch the bears in their roomy pits at the same time. The bears lurched back and forth on the concrete floors, splashed in their little private ponds, or swung in and out of the dens at the

backs of the pits. The bear-pits were under the side of a hill, but the bears could not climb out on account of strong curved iron bars at the top of the slope. The great white polar bear that was Miss Margaret's favorite, kept walking into his pool and out the other side over and over again, stopping once in awhile to lie on the concrete in a great puddle of water, and pant.

The lunch was just what everyone wanted, and when Miss Margaret opened the box of cake there was a chorus of satisfied "Oh-h-hs!" The cake did look so nice, all frosted, top and sides. She cut it and passed it around. Each one took a big bite—each one began to chew—each one looked surprised, and kept chewing, and chewing, and chewing! When Mr. Johnston could speak, he said, "Margaret, what's the matter with this cake? I thought I was chewing gum."

"Oh, brother, Susie Pearl must have made a mistake and used the gluten flour that the doctor ordered for your muffins!"

"I don't care for gluten cake. The polar bear may have my piece."

So the polar bear got the whole loaf, and he

ate it in such huge mouthfuls that it was gone before they knew it, and he was standing on his hind legs, reaching out his paws between the bars and begging for more.

During the lunch-time, Mr. Johnston and Abbott had been looking at their watches, and now they said, "Come on. It's time."

"Time for what?" demanded Timothy.

"Time to see something."

They went through the Zoo grounds and reached a place where a railway car stood on a siding. Near it were several attendants, a wagon with a strong cage on it, chains and iron-shod poles. The men were backing the wagon up to the closed and heavily-barred door of the car.

"Stand back!" they called.

"Get up on the settees," said Mr. Johnston. "They are going to unload some tigers!"

Silent, breathing very quickly, fascinated and almost frightened, they watched the cage chained to the car. Both doors were then drawn up, and from the black interior of the car shot a striped yellow and black shape that snarled and bit at the

poles that drove him into the cage on the wagon. The doors were lowered into place, padlocked, and the cage was carried away on the cart. And as it drove away, Timothy realized that there was a familiar whirring sound behind him.

"There's a moving-picture camera here," he said.

"Sure there is," came the answer. "Don't you know by this time that Uncle Sam is always 'Johnny-on-the-spot'?"

The children cried out, for there, behind them, with his camera that had taken the wonderful pictures at Todd's Ferry, was Mr. Sims. And Stanley Blake was with him.

How they all talked! "Where are Claire and Isabelle?" "Are they coming to Todd's Ferry this summer?" "My, Francis, it seems good to see you scrambling about so strong and well."

Claire and Isabelle were working in California, but were coming East very soon. Mr. Sims had been sent to take the unloading of the animals for a weekly moving-picture concern, and Stanley was shooting them for the Government. He

had told Mr. Johnston about it, and suggested that the children come to the Zoo on that day.

Three tigers and a grizzly bear were carried off to their new homes; then the wagon drove away, and a runway was put up to the car door.

"What's coming now?" said Trudy, clinging to Miss Margaret.

"A tame fellow. You won't have to keep out of his way. Watch."

In the doorway appeared the queerest figure, squatting on big strong hind legs, holding its ridiculous little fore-paws folded over its breast like a polite old lady, and turning its long deer-like face inquiringly from side to side.

"A kangaroo!"

"Yes. Notice the man. He steers him by the tail, just as you drive an automobile by the wheel."

Sure enough, the kangaroo hopped obediently down the slanting runway, and behind him came the keeper, holding the long thick tail. He did not attempt to chain the kangaroo, but walked along, guiding him easily by turning the tail, exactly as Timothy had guided Jack-horse by the

reins again and again. The kangaroo seemed to enjoy being out in the warm sunshine, and looked about, but the man paid little attention to him, turning to chat with another keeper who followed him.

Mr. Johnston was talking to a man in the crowd. Suddenly the kangaroo stopped, and with a couple of mighty leaps left the keeper and landed behind Mr. Johnston. He stood there, resting his little front paws on Mr. Johnston's shoulders. Before anyone could call, Mr. Johnston, thinking someone who wanted to speak to him, had touched him, turned, and looked directly into the long furry face of Mr. Kangaroo!

And then—such a yell as the Santa Claus man gave, and how he did run! But only for a few steps, for Timothy caught him.

"It's only a harmless little kangaroo! Oh, don't you ever say anything more to me about being scared by a yak ——"

And all the way home Mr. Johnston kept explaining that he wasn't really scared at all, only he was so startled, and as soon as he saw it was a kangaroo, he was all right; and he was really very

fond of kangaroos, until Miss Margaret said, "Well, brother dear, if you're so fond of them, I'll try to buy you one for a pet."

In the evening the telephone rang. Miss Margaret answered it, and they heard her say, "Oh, that's very nice—yes, I know he would like it —— I was going to buy him a live one, but I'm sure this would be less trouble —— Thank you. Good-bye."

And as she hung up the receiver, she said, laughing, "Brother dear, Mr. Sims got a fine picture of you and your kangaroo. He's going to send you one very soon."

CHAPTER X

HOME AGAIN

THE April days in Washington were lovely. There was so much green grass, and so many lovely fresh trees, and such a lot of spring shrubs and flowers. The nights were soft and warm. When Trudy and Belle put out their lights and opened the shutters they saw the stars shining in the dark sky. And each night, each little girl saw something else. Trudy saw her great elm tree with the oriole's nest that hung close to her window; Belle saw her father and mother sitting by the table with the red-checked cloth, reading the paper. Timothy, looking toward the wireless tower, saw his shed-attic, with the trap-door over the bench, and the tools that he had not used for weeks. And when they walked the busy streets, they saw the roads and lanes and green fields of Todd's Ferry stretching ever before them.

Belle spoke first. "Miss Margaret, we've had a wonderful time, and I shall never forget it as long as I live, but, dear Miss Margaret, I want to go home."

Timothy spoke quickly. "There's lots to do in the spring. I told Amos I'd help him on his fish route, too. He expects a pretty busy season."

Trudy said, "When will you come?"

"Dears, I've just been waiting to know when you were ready. I did not want you to go until you had had your good times here, but now I am as anxious to get home to New Hampshire as you are. Suppose we start next Monday. That will give us time to get some little gifts for everyone, and plenty of time to pack. My brother cannot leave just now, but Susie Pearl will take good care of him."

"Isn't Francis going?"

"Of course I'm going! You didn't think I wasn't, did you? Why, I can do things this year and not lie around in a wheel chair any more."

The trip home was even more fun than the journey to Washington, for this time things were

not strange; they could look out of the window and know where to look for the last glimpse of the Monument; they could see what Baltimore looked like in the daytime; the porter on the train was the one they had come down with, and he remembered them and asked if they had had a good time. In New York they changed to the Fall River boat and sailed past the great sky-scrapers, seeing the Statue of Liberty and then, just as they were preparing for a nice evening on deck, down came the fog like a smothering white blanket, covering them with drops of moisture and driving them to their staterooms, where they lay, listening to the thunder of the fog-horn that blew all night, roaring, "Who? *Who?* WHO?" and waiting just a second to catch the other horns that answered, "Who—are—you?" The children knew they could never sleep in such a racket, but something shut their eyes, and then it was morning, with a scramble from the boat and a hurried breakfast, and a dash for the morning train from the North Station.

Then familiar places, the idea that perhaps someone from home might be on the train, the

stop at Concord, the first view of the mountain across the fields, the woods that were beginning to put forth little new leaves, as the trees in Washington had done weeks before, the brown fields with men ploughing, and the stop for the High School boys and girls, with their bags of books. "Why, hello, here's Timothy and Trudy! Did you have a good time?"—all the big boys and girls speaking. And then the station ——

"Oh, look, Belle! Your father's got the new automobile stage!"

"Trudy, see, Trudy, there's Grandmother and Grandfather ——"

"Oh, Trudy Todd, there's your ——"

"Mother, oh, Mother darling—and Father, too!"

And they were on the platform, hugging everybody. For Mr. Perkins had brought all the families to the station to meet the children, and had used the new automobile stage for the first time. No other passengers could ride in it this trip. It was for the Todd's Ferry travelers and their own dear ones. The few other people who had come must ride on the old stage.

"Where's Amos?" inquired Timothy, and then, as he raced around the corner of the station, he saw him, sitting on the front seat of the new stage, gripping the wheel, his eyes straight ahead.

"Holding the new horses," he said solemnly. "New ones are always afraid of the train, you know."

"Oh, Amos, can you run it? Are you going to have one for the fish-route? Do you think Mr. Perkins will teach me to drive?"

He clambered up beside him.

"Gracious, I supposed all you Washington folks would know all the ins and outs of automobiles. I guess Todd's Ferry will be pretty slow after all the excitement you have been used to."

There was so much to say on the ride home. Trudy sat with Mother's arm about her; Belle was on the front seat with her father; the rest were leaning forward and talking with each other.

The narrow, woodsy roads with the farmhouses here and there, were quiet and cool. Swallows sat on the telegraph wires. King-

birds swung on the tops of low bushes, and brown thrashers trilled on the tips of the maple trees. Blue and white violets gleamed among the little ferns at the roadside, and over all was the lovely blue sky with fleecy white clouds drifting before the west wind. And then they were at the village. Mr. McAdam was waiting on the store porch and waved his hand as soon as the stage came in sight. Bill, behind him, in his overalls and red sweater, and all the boys, pretending to wait for the mail, but really waiting for Timothy and Francis. Miss Fields hurried out from the store, and everyone called out, "Welcome home!" and in a second, "Why, where is Mr. Johnston?"

"Coming soon," replied Miss Margaret.

Mr. Perkins drove up to Grandfather's farmhouse just as he had the first time Trudy ever saw Todd's Ferry, but to-day he drove to the little red house too, and Miss Margaret and Francis stopped there for the night.

"Good-bye, Belle," called Trudy. "Come up to-morrow, won't you?"

"Yes, and you come right over to see me.

You know we've got to help Pa fix his collection of Washington cards."

Next day, after the trunks were unpacked, Trudy ran over to Grandmother's. Timothy and Francis were in the shed-attic.

"Come on up," called Francis. "We're making a closet for the sap-house. In a few minutes we're going over to set it up."

"We're going to make a regular camp there, and play it's in the Shasta Reservation," added Timothy. "I'm going to practise making bread on a stick, like Abbott told us, and Francis has a book that tells how to make fires, and you can ask your mother to give us a frying-pan. Grandmother can't spare any of hers."

"Oh, won't that be great! We can take sandwiches and stay all day."

"I wonder where those old lumbermen are," said Timothy. "I hope Mr. Perkins hasn't sold them any more lumber. If we let Belle camp with us, she will have to tell her father about the rules."

"Belle doesn't want her father to have all his

wood cut off. She said she told him so, but he just laughed."

"Well, anyway, I sent him a lot of books about forestry, and she must make him read them."

"Come on, Timothy," interrupted Francis. "Let's go."

As they crossed the road they heard a call, and saw Amos walking up the hill.

"Where now?" he said. "I'll bet I can guess. To the sap-house."

"Right. How is everything?"

"Bad neighborhood over there now. The saw-mill is just above. You can hear them at work all day long, and they get their water from the spring. They wanted Aunt Theresy to board them, but she didn't feel able, so they have built a shack and board themselves. They want to get all the trees around here, I guess. Asked Turner to sell them some, but they won't ask him again."

"Why? What did he say?"

"Said he wouldn't sell, and, more than that, he told them not to cross his land on the way to the village. They don't either, for he is chairman of the selectmen, you know."

"How is Aunt Theresy? We're going over there as soon as we get something made for her. We brought a lot of post-cards, and we're going to make them into a book, with writing telling about the places we saw. Don't you think she will like that?"

"I brought you a Scout knife, Amos," announced Timothy. "It's a great knife. They're expensive, too. You can do anything with it. We'll take it when we go in the woods, camping. I wrote you about the Forest Ranger, Abbott Kimball, didn't I? He's Stanley Blake's cousin, and he works for the Government too, and he's great. I wish he would come up here. But I don't suppose he can, for he has to go where the reservations are and help take care of them. I wish we had a reservation here. Then maybe they would send him up to take care of it. But he told us a lot of things, and you and I are going to study so we can know as much as he does. Of course, we can't practise shooting bears, but ——"

"You can't even find a yak up here, Timothy," laughed Francis.

"What's a yak?" said Amos. "And what makes Timothy so red?"

"Never you mind about the yak. I'll bet you'd run from a hedgehog if you thought he was going to quill you!"

"I'll tell you about the yak some time, Amos," promised Trudy. "Are you going over to the sap-house with us?"

"Might as well. I'm taking a vacation day to celebrate your home-coming."

They took the short cut across the fields, and over the brook. As they approached the sap-house they could hear the buzzing of the sawmill, and the loud voices of the men. The trees around the sap-house had not been cut, for they were Grandfather's that he had bought from Aunt Theresy, and they hid the mill. But the noise spoiled the place. All the time it seemed as if something were threatening the peaceful woods. While they were nailing the closet in place, a strange man came to the spring for a drink.

"Hello," he said, "no objection to our using your spring, I presume? Mr. Todd said we might."

"Well," replied Amos, "if he said yes, we can't say no."

"Haven't any standing timber you want to sell, have you?" the man went on. "These trees round here would bring quite a tidy sum. Those big pines over yonder take my eye, though. I'm going to make a try for them. I'm told the old lady won't sell, but I guess if I make her a big enough offer she'll change her mind. Money talks, you know."

Trudy was so angry she could not speak. She turned away to hide the tears in her eyes, and Francis went over to comfort her. But Timothy faced the man.

"That's Aunt Theresy you're talking about," he said, very loud, "and you'd better be careful. And let me tell you something—she will never, *never* sell her big pines. They belonged to her ancestors, and she loves them, and she's going to keep them forever and ever, amen, and you don't know a thing about it. I've been in a moving picture with those trees, and the picture is going to be shown all over the United States, and you needn't think you can come in here and buy those

trees and cut them down, for you can't! And I guess you needn't come down here for any more water, either. I'll speak to my grandfather about your case!"

The man laughed. "Say, young fellow, you're some spit-fire, aren't you? Got the temper that goes with your red head. I guess nobody is going to ask you whether the trees will be sold or not. They don't belong to you. Wait till they do before you talk so big!"

"Timothy, I'm glad you said it!" cried Trudy as the man strode away. "He shan't have her trees. Shall he, Amos?"

But Amos did not answer.

CHAPTER XI

AUNT THERESY IS SICK

BELLE was telephoning to Trudy. "Yes, you come down to my house. Get Francis and Timothy, and bring your journals. Pa is going to stay at home this afternoon, and wants us to help him arrange his collection of Washington cards." She lowered her voice. "Can you hear me?—All right, tell Timothy to bring all his forestry stuff!"

Mr. Perkins had a lame finger. One of the horses had stepped on it, and he was at home until it was better. Ben Dobson was driving the automobile stage. Ben was a big lad of seventeen now, as tall as Amos, and when he was home from the Academy between terms, did a man's work.

The children came in laden with cards, books and pamphlets.

"I declare," said Mr. Perkins, staring at the collection. "What is this anyway? A lecture?"

"Maybe," replied Francis. "We're all ready to answer any questions you want to ask."

"First question. When is Mr. Johnston coming?"

"Oh, to-night! Aren't you glad?"

"To-night? Well, then, you can stay to supper and ride up on the stage. Mother can find something for you to eat, I guess; can't you, Mother?"

"I certainly can. If we can't find anything else, we'll eat some of Belle's preserves."

"Now how are you going to begin your book, Mr. Perkins?" asked Timothy. "Here's a card of the South Station in Boston. That's where our trip really began."

They sorted the cards, and talked about the places. It was very strange how much they found to say about trees and forests, and how often Abbott Kimball's name was mentioned. Mr. Perkins was interested in Abbott's experiences in California, and told about his great-uncle who had gone to California as a gold hunter in 1849, sailing around the whole coast of North and South America, and living for weeks and

weeks on the vessel: landing at San Francisco with the thousands of other gold-seekers when it was just a collection of rough board houses, and then tramping into the mountains.

"And did he find the gold?"

"Oh, yes, he found gold, but he had to spend it all to get home again. Everything cost so much. He came home poorer than he went."

"It seems to me," said Timothy, "you can't do very much if you haven't money."

"That's so," agreed Mr. Perkins heartily. "Money is a pretty handy thing to have. You remember that, and save some for a rainy day. Never can tell when you're going to need some, and when you do need it, you're likely to need it bad."

"Timothy's got money in the bank at Concord," said Trudy, "and so have I. We earned it when we kept store. Grandfather took us to Concord and we put it in the bank ourselves."

"Glad to hear it," approved Mr. Perkins.

Timothy looked at him, wondering if he put all the money that the lumbermen gave him in the bank. If he did, he must be rich. He had

sold so many trees. Abbott would know how much the trees were worth. Some kinds were worth more than others—like the big pines—like the huge trees in California where Abbott had camped.

"Did your uncle see the big trees in California?"

"Never heard him mention them."

"You know our trees are remarkable for this part of the country. Abbott says he'd like to see them. I was telling him about them, and there are pictures of them in the Department of Forestry at Washington. You know, the pictures Mr. Sims and Stanley Blake made, when we all acted in the moving picture."

But Mr. Perkins did not seem to take any interest in the big trees of Todd's Ferry, and Timothy gave up in despair.

When they were in the barn, milking Mr. Perkins' cows, he said to Belle, "Does your father read the things they send him from Washington?"

"Well, I never see him, but he generally reads after I've gone to bed. Somebody reads them,

though, because I find them all folded inside out."

"Is he going to let the lumbermen cut any more timber?"

"I don't think he has sold any more yet. The boss was here the other day, and Father told him to come again in a little while. The boss was pretty cross when he went away. And—oh, Timothy, what do you think? I heard him tell Father about some corking timber he had his eye on, and was going to get, too. Do you suppose he could have meant Aunt Theresy's pines?"

"I guess he won't get them," said Timothy.

While they were eating supper, the telephone rang. Mrs. Perkins answered and they heard her say, "Oh, I'm so sorry—certainly—I'll be right up there, just as soon as I harness —— No, I can put the horse in her barn—yes, I can stay all night."

"What is it, Mother?" said Mr. Perkins. "Somebody sick?"

"Yes, Theresy Hinton. That was Mrs. Todd telephoning. She said Theresy has not been feeling well for some time, but to-day she collapsed.

Mrs. Todd has been with her this afternoon, but she has to go home to-night and wants me to sit up with her."

"Sit up with Aunt Theresy!" That was serious. The children stared with sober faces. Trudy spoke first, "Oh, Mrs. Perkins, is she very sick?"

"There, there, I guess not, but you know she lives by herself, and sick folks can't be left alone. I'll go right along, Father. Belle, you wash the dishes. You children go right home when the stage comes."

It was a very sad group that met the Santa Claus man on the stage. And he shook his head when he heard the news. That made it worse. The Santa Claus man could do almost everything, but even he could not always cure sick folks. And they were all thinking about the day in the early spring when Aunt Theresy had sat so silent in her kitchen, with her apron to her face. They had seen her crying. Perhaps she had felt sick then. And Aunt Theresy lived all alone. But Amos had said she was rich in friends. They must see Amos and talk this over.

At church and Sunday School next day they heard people talking about Aunt Theresy's sickness. There was something queer about it. One said, "Well, I didn't see how she could manage." Another said it was too bad she had had to sell so much of her land. But Timothy, out by the horse-sheds, heard the men talking. "She'll have to sell them," they said emphatically. "She never can pay her bills unless she does—and she wouldn't accept a cent from anyone."

On the way home they met Amos. He was coming from Aunt Theresy's house. He looked worried, and did not joke.

"Tell us how Aunt Theresy is," they said.

"The doctor has just been. He says there isn't much the matter, only she's kind of run down and tired out. There seems to be something on her mind. She's worrying about something."

Amos went on. Timothy stood in the road, staring after him.

Sunday was a sad day, and Monday, at school, was worse. It was impossible to study. The

children hurried home after school, and Trudy went up to the farmhouse with Timothy.

Grandmother was packing a basket.

"Is that for Aunt Theresy?" asked Timothy. "Let us take it over?"

"Yes, I wish you would. Miss Margaret is with her to-day, and these are some things she will need. Now don't be a bother, and don't stop."

"Come on down by the sap-house," suggested Trudy; "it's cooler that way."

They went down the path behind the barn, saying very little. Trudy was too sorrowful to talk, and Timothy was trying to fit together the remarks he had heard about Aunt Theresy.

On either side of the path the ground was white with the starry flowers of the bunch-berry; blue flag bloomed on the borders of the brook; young birds were rustling the leaves of the bushes in their short flights from branch to branch, trying their timid wings. Mother birds flew boldly before the children, pretending to be hurt in an effort to lead them away from the baby birds. In a little open space beyond the brook, where

the sun was hot, Trudy spied wild strawberries.

"Oh, Timothy, wild strawberries! Let's pick some for Aunt Theresy. She loves them, and maybe she could eat a few. It won't take long if we both pick. And we're almost to the sap-house, so we haven't much farther to go."

They put the basket down by the side of the path and began hunting for the largest, ripest berries. They hurried here and there, looking down among the leaves for the red and fragrant berries, and did not notice that they were getting near the steam sawmill. The mill was quiet today; no one was working, but the men were sitting out in front of the shack, smoking and talking. In the still woods, their loud voices carried far. Their words made the children stop, made them look fearfully at each other, made them tiptoe carefully back toward the path.

"Timothy," sobbed Trudy, "did you hear them? Did you hear that awful thing they said?"

"Yes, I did!" Timothy had to stop and swallow the lump in his throat. "I heard them,

but they didn't say she *had,* they only said she *was going to,* but she isn't, not to them!"

"Timothy, that's what makes her sick. She's got to sell her trees—that man said so!"

"Well, she *isn't,* I tell you!"

"But what can we do?" Trudy's voice rose to a wail.

"Keep still—they'll hear you. You stop crying and do exactly what I tell you. This is a case for the club!"

When the four children had come back to Todd's Ferry after their Washington trip, they had formed a little secret club, called the "We Four, No More," and had promised themselves to do all they could in every way to help in the Government work that they had learned so much about and found so interesting.

Trudy's face brightened. But she was not satisfied.

"But, Timothy, if she sells those trees, and those wicked men cut them down right in front of her own dear house, why, Timothy, she'll die!"

Timothy went on. "You take this basket and the berries, and go as fast as you can to Aunt

Theresy's and leave them, and don't you say one word to anybody about what we know!"

"But, Timothy, we must tell our Santa Claus man. He will know what to do. He can stop them."

"Don't you know what Amos said about Aunt Theresy's being so proud? Grown folks can't do this. We can! Those old lumbermen won't see her while she's sick. We won't take any chances, though. Gee! This is a great piece of work for the Club. We can cure Aunt Theresy, now we know what ails her. You go on with the things and hustle back to the sap-house. I'll call Belle and Francis, and we'll meet you there and plan it, then we'll go and tell Aunt Theresy, and she'll be all right!"

"Tell her what, Timothy?"

"You big ninny, don't you know yet? Tell her *we're* going to buy the big pines, of course!"

CHAPTER XII

IN THE SAP-HOUSE

TRUDY picked up Grandmother's basket and put the wild strawberries, in their green cups of maple leaves, on the white napkin. Timothy had raced away. She went on, completely bewildered. She could not understand how the "We Four, No More" could possibly buy Aunt Theresy's great pines. Yet she was sure that, if Timothy said it could be done, he would find a way. Hadn't he found a way to earn the money to go to Washington? But she wondered how they would manage. She wondered so very much that she did not notice the dazzling white-edged clouds that were piling up in the west; she wondered so much that she almost forgot to speak to Amos, who was splitting wood in Aunt Theresy's shed; and she did not answer until Miss Margaret had repeated her question.

"Did Grandmother say she was coming over to-night?"

"She didn't say. Isn't Aunt Theresy any better?"

"No, dear, I'm afraid she isn't. I have to go home to get some clothes, and I'll stop at Grandmother's and plan about sitting up to-night. Mrs. Perkins stayed last night. Amos will stay now until I get back. Trudy, you'd better come along with me. I heard thunder just now."

"Oh, that's a long way off. I don't believe it's coming here. The showers generally go down the Merrimac. Besides, Miss Margaret, I have to go back to the sap-house. There's a very important club meeting."

Timothy had raced up the path and across the field to his own house. He called up Belle, and then called Francis, only to learn from Mr. Johnston that he was already on his way to the farmhouse. Impatiently he fidgeted up and down the road, watching.

Belle's mother looked out at the clouds when Belle announced that she was going up to the sap-house. "I don't know," she said; "it looks

to me like a shower, and you know, Belle, you're awfully afraid of thunder."

But Timothy had said things that made Belle sure that she must go to the sap-house. She looked at the clouds, now turning gray, and slowly piling up into the blue sky Yet the sun was shining brightly.

" I can get there before the shower, Mother," she said. "And maybe it will go 'round."

So, while Trudy was hurrying back from Aunt Theresy's, and while Miss Margaret was walking up the road to the big house, Timothy and Francis were striding down the path, talking fast and seriously and Belle was scampering through woods that were beginning to grow uncomfortably dark. She could not help thinking of Judith, who had raced with the hurricane when the other great trees were blown down. Then she thought of Aunt Theresy's trees and what Timothy had said—"And she's going to sell them, Belle, to those old lumbermen who bought your father's woods, and that's what is making her sick. We've got to get busy." So she forgot the darkening woods and went swiftly on

until she could see the green walls of the sap-house, and hear the children calling, "Oh, Belle, hurry, Belle!"

They went in and shut the door. They pulled the seats up to the long table, for in summer the sap-house was furnished like a camp, and sat solemnly down. Then Belle and Francis and Trudy looked at Timothy and waited for him to speak.

"Well," he said, "you all know what we're here for. I suppose you're all willing to help."

There wasn't any need to answer that.

So Timothy went on.

"I haven't had much time to think how, but, of course, we've got to buy the trees. Aunt Theresy won't sell to anyone in the village; any grown folks, I mean, for she thinks they will buy them out of charity. I've heard Grandfather say so. He tried to buy them when he bought the sap orchard, but she said, 'No, they aren't any use to you,' and he knew what she meant."

"Then won't she think the same thing if we buy them?" It was Francis who asked the question.

"Well, you see, she knows we're interested in trees and things since we came home from Washington, and maybe she'll be too sick to think very much about it. If we can only get her to sign a paper and take some money, she can't go back on it. And when she knows the trees aren't going to be cut down, she'll get well right off."

"That's right about the paper and the money," agreed Belle. "That's 'binding the bargain.' I've heard Pa tell about that. He made the lumbermen do it when ——"

"But," interrupted Trudy, "where shall we get the money to bind the bargain? I haven't any. I had my nickel for Sunday School but that went into the collection."

"Oh, it don't take much to bind a bargain," said Timothy. "I've got the three dollars and sixteen cents left from my trip, and that'll do." He jingled the change in his pocket.

"How much are the trees worth?" asked Francis. "We ought to know how much is a fair price. I haven't much money, but I can work this summer and earn some, and I'll give you all I earn for my share."

"That's the worst of it," grumbled Timothy. "We ought to offer her a fair price, and I don't know how much they are worth. Oh, dear, if we only had Abbott here. He'd know all about it. He'd get out and measure those trees quick as a wink, and figure it all up and tell us to a cent."

The children sat silent, thinking. Outside, the clouds had covered the sun. The wind rose, and lashed the maple trees. The sap-house grew darker and darker. The thunder rolled nearer and nearer, but Belle did not notice it. She was not thinking of thunder. But, at home, her mother looked anxiously out of the window, and in the woods between her house and the sap-house her father was hurrying to his girl, fearing that she would be frightened, and perhaps hurt, in the storm that was coming so swiftly.

"It's dark," said Timothy; "I can't see my figures. Light the lantern, somebody."

Trudy lit the lantern and put it in the middle of the table.

"Well," said Timothy at last, "suppose we call it a thousand dollars. That's an awful lot of money, and it will take us years and years to

pay it, and perhaps before we get it all paid, Abbott will come up here and tell us if it's right; and anyway, if we pay her too much, she'll give it back to us. Of course, we'll have to pay it so much a month."

"I'll figure it out," said Francis.

"No," said Timothy, "that's no use, 'cause we might not be able to pay the same amount each month. You draw up the paper. You can write better than we can, and we'll tell you what to say."

Four heads, red and black, light gold and brown, huddled together about the smoky lantern. The children were so busy that they did not hear the thunder that was now crashing very near, or the rain that began to beat on the roof in great splashing drops. They did not hear the door of the sap-house open and then quickly close. They did not hear Mr. Perkins come in.

What Mr. Perkins heard when he opened the door made him come in very softly and stand very still. If Mr. Perkins remembered that it was not right to listen, he didn't care. He deliberately listened! He wanted to hear it all.

This is what he heard when he opened the door.

Francis was reading aloud.

" This is an agreement between Theresa Hinton, and Timothy Todd, Gertrude Todd, Belle Perkins and Francis Lang. Theresa Hinton agrees to sell the others her big pines, and they agree to pay her for them the sum of one thousand dollars or a fair price, as soon as they can, and they agree furthermore (I know they always use that word) that the big pines shall never be cut down, as long as they all shall live."

Mr. Perkins leaned forward. He heard more.

" That sounds all right, Francis," approved Timothy. " Now draw some lines for us to sign on. There—now all we have to do is to go over and get her to sign it, and we write our names, and that's all there is to it."

"All but paying," sighed Trudy. " What can I do to get my share? "

" Oh, Trudy," cried Belle, " we can both do the same thing. We can make preserves and sell them to the boarders. Boarders have heaps of money, you know, and they might just as well

give us some of it, and they're always crazy about home-made preserves."

"Miss Fields sells preserves in her tea-room."

"But you know she never has enough. We shouldn't hurt her trade. And I have some perfectly elegant sweet peas started, and we'll make them into bunches and sell them to the boarders at Todd House."

"I can take pictures, and finish them for other folks, too," said Francis.

"Grandfather is going to give me five dollars a month for helping him this summer, and I'll put that all in. I'm pretty well supplied with clothes; I shan't need to spend it."

"We ought to get as much as fifteen dollars, or perhaps twenty a month—that would be—twelve times fifteen ——"

"A hundred and eighty dollars a year," quickly said Belle.

"Well, that's not so bad. We ought to pay off the thousand in six years. I'll be about twenty then, and of course, the older we grow, the more we can earn."

Mr. Perkins cleared his throat.

The children jumped and turned from the table.

"Why, Pa!" said Belle, "where did you come from?"

"Your mother sent me up with your waterproof and umbrella. We've had a bad shower."

"We have?" said Belle.

Timothy was watching Mr. Perkins. He was wondering just how long Belle's father had been in the sap-house.

"I hope you'll excuse me," said Mr. Perkins, "but when I came in, you were all very busy and I didn't like to interrupt you. I heard what you said about buying Theresy's trees."

Mr. Perkins stopped, and cleared his throat again. He seemed to have trouble with his eyes. Perhaps there were rain-drops in them. He blinked something away.

The children looked at Timothy.

"Yes," said he, "I guess we've got to. You see we heard the lumbermen saying that she was going to sell the trees to them, and of course that is what ails her. She can't bear to see those trees cut down. They shouldn't be cut down, anyway.

I know you don't care about trees, Mr. Perkins, but I really wish you did. We don't want the big pines cut down, so we are going to buy them. Did you hear the agreement that Francis made? Would you mind telling us if it is all right?"

"It sounded all right to me," said Mr. Perkins decidedly. "It certainly did sound fine! But you ought to have someone for a witness to your signatures. Am I right in supposing that this thing has got to be done immediately?"

"The sooner we do it, the sooner she will get well."

"Then may I make a suggestion? You notice that the shower is over. Suppose we all go over to Theresy's house, and I will be the witness. You know I have had a good deal of experience in selling trees. Maybe I might be able to help you out a bit."

Timothy stared at him. If that wasn't a queer thing to say! Of course they all knew he had been selling trees! Hadn't Amos and all of them tried to stop him? Hadn't Timothy sent him post-cards of trees, and hadn't the people in the Bureau of Forestry sent him dozens and

dozens of pamphlets, telling how important trees were to the life of man and beast? What good was it all? Probably Mr. Perkins would sell every single tree on his place. He was a horrid man! Still, he *did* know all about agreements, so perhaps he might as well come along. Timothy blew out the lantern.

"Come on," he said gruffly, "let's get started."

Belle slipped her hand in her father's; somehow she felt that he had not said all he was thinking. She looked up in his face, and she was sure that something was making him feel happy. He clasped her hand close, and said, "Be careful where you walk, girlie, the path is pretty wet."

"Oh," cried Francis, "see the rainbow!"

It was still raining gently, soft little scattering drops, but over in the east, where the shower was passing, rain fell, and through the raindrops, against the clouds, arching the heavens, glowed the beautiful perfect bow, every color clear and distinct. And while they stood watching it, another bow appeared, above, and fainter, but showing the whole curve, a wonderful reflected rainbow.

"It's a double bow," said Trudy softly. "You hardly ever see the double bow. It means good luck. I wonder where the end of it is. There's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow."

"Gee," said Timothy, "if I knew where that pot of gold was, I'd get it and pay for the big pines."

Mr. Perkins laughed, long and hearty.

"The end of it's right over Theresy's house," he said. "Come on, we'll find it."

"Huh," grunted Timothy scornfully, "there's no pot of gold in that house. That's just the trouble."

"Who knows?" said Mr. Perkins, pressing Belle's hand.

CHAPTER XIII

THE POT OF GOLD

THEY hurried along the path to Aunt Theresy's house, very quiet and thoughtful. Suddenly Mr. Perkins spoke.

"What's the name of your club?"

"We Four, No More," replied Francis.

"That's kind of a bad name if you should ever want to enlarge the club, isn't it?"

"We're not going to enlarge it," was Timothy's answer.

"That's worse! I was going to apply for membership. If you would let me join your club, I could help buy the trees. I'd be willing to pay twice as much every month as you four earned. Wait a minute"—he hurried on as Timothy started to speak. "I know what you are going to say. You are afraid I might want to hurt the trees. There isn't a bit of danger. If I should want to sell them, or cut them down, or anything, I could not do it unless you all

agreed. Because we should have to vote on it as club members, and you would all vote against me."

"Oh, Mr. Perkins," said Trudy, "do you mean it?"

"Sure he means it," said Belle. "Pa never says anything unless he means it."

"What do you say?" said Mr. Perkins.

The children looked at each other. Timothy's opinion of Mr. Perkins was beginning to change.

"We'll vote right now," he announced. "All those in favor of admitting Mr. Perkins to membership in the 'We Four, No More' will show it by saying 'Aye.'"

The "Aye" was so loud that Mr. Perkins looked about uneasily.

"Hush!" he cautioned. "Don't shout so loud. We're almost there."

"Mr. Perkins," said Timothy seriously, "are you sure you want to pay all that money? We're going to earn all we possibly can, you know. And Belle said that your new automobile stage was pretty expensive."

Mr. Perkins assured him. "It's all right. I

can afford it. And the more you earn, the more I'll pay, and the sooner Aunt Theresy will get her money. Hush, now, the windows are open."

They had reached the house. They went in through the shed door. Amos heard them, and came out from the bedroom where he had been sitting with Aunt Theresy. He shut the door behind him.

"What's all this?" he said softly, "a surprise party? Sorry, but the lady of the house is hardly up to a party to-night. I'm nurse while Miss Margaret is home getting some supplies."

"Oh, Amos," said Trudy, clasping his arm, "we have come to make Aunt Theresy all well. We know what is the matter, and we know how to cure her, and, oh, Amos, *dear Mr. Perkins is going to help!*"

Amos stared at dear Mr. Perkins.

"She's right," he agreed. "And we're all going in now to see Theresy. She will be glad to see us, and it won't do her a bit of harm."

"I don't know about that," said Amos; "she doesn't seem to take any interest in anything."

"Well," said Timothy emphatically, "I guess

she will take an interest when we tell her we're going to buy the big pines and save them from those miserable old lumbermen!"

And then Amos stared at dear Mr. Perkins harder than ever.

Mr. Perkins turned red.

"Guess your talks must have done some good, Amos," he said, "though you thought you didn't make much headway. They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but these youngsters and you seem to be teaching me a few. Come on in with us and hear the story. I promise you it won't hurt Theresy. It will cure her, just as they say."

Amos opened the door.

Very quietly they all went into Aunt Theresy's bedroom. It was a corner room, with two windows. One faced the field, and the blinds of that one were open; the other looked toward the big pines, and the blinds of that were shut tight.

Aunt Theresy lay in the big high bed, so white and frail. Her eyes were shut. She did not open them until Amos said, "Theresy, here's some company for you."

She looked at them without turning her head. She smiled a little. The children turned to Mr. Perkins. "Tell her," said Belle. "Oh, Pa, tell her quick!"

Mr. Perkins went over to the bed.

"Theresy," he said, smiling, "these children have brought you a new prescription, and you're going to take a big dose this very minute, and it's going to put you on your feet. It's the very best kind of medicine in the whole world. It's made of love and kindness, and helpfulness and brotherly feeling; Theresy, they have found out your secret that we blundering busy old folks never guessed. They overheard the lumbermen saying that you were going to sell the pines."

And then a terrible thing happened. Aunt Theresy began to cry. If it had been dreadful to see her crying in the kitchen, all dressed and with her blue-checked apron on, it was just unbearable to see her cry now, when she was sick and in bed.

"But, darling Aunt Theresy," cried Trudy, running to her and climbing on the bed, "you're not going to do it! No, indeed, we're going to

buy them ourselves; the club, you know, the 'We Four, No More' that went to Washington and learned about trees and things. We're going to have them for our very own, and we're going to keep them always, and we're going to pay you for them every month. You won't mind having the money a little at a time, will you? 'Cause you know you'll get it all in time, and darling Aunt Theresy, Belle's father is going to help us!"

"Oh, children, you blessed children, to think of such a beautiful plan. But I can't let you do it. It isn't right to burden you with my troubles. No, I've made up my mind ——"

Amos slipped up and raised her on the pillows. He arranged them behind her, and then he, too, sat on the edge of the bed.

"Theresy," he said, "these children love the trees as much as you do. They love you, too. And they love Todd's Ferry. It is their home. They are proud of it, and want to do all they can for it. You know that—they proved that last year. They prove it every day. They are growing up and you and I are growing older. Some day they will take our places. If now,

"YOU BLESSED CHILDREN, TO THINK OF SUCH A BEAUTIFUL PLAN"

while they are young, they want to do this thing for the home we all love, who are we to stop them? Theresy, all your life you have kept the trees and guarded them. You are not going to forsake them now, simply because you're proud? Let the children guard them. No one could do it better."

Just as the rainbow had appeared through the shower, Aunt Theresy's smile crept out through her tears. She pushed Amos away and sat upright. It was as Mr. Perkins had said. The medicine the children had brought was indeed wonderful. You could see Aunt Theresy grow better.

"Amos," she said, "you old fraud, I believe you planned this."

"I wish I had," he said. "But I never heard of it until this delegation walked in on me in the shed. I tried to keep them away from you, but now I'm glad they came."

"Oh, so am I," Aunt Theresy answered. "You blessed friends, how can I say no any longer? Of course I'll sell you the trees. And won't somebody open the front blinds so I can

see them? I can look at them now without imagining them crashing to earth."

Timothy threw open the blinds. There, across the road, mighty and strong, were the great trunks, ribbed with the bark of the growth of years. Safe they stood, and safe would they stand until the years alone should make them fall!

"Well," said Timothy, pulling a paper from his pocket, "let's get busy and finish things up! Here's the agreement, Aunt Theresy, and here's three dollars and sixteen cents to bind the bargain. You sign your name here. Get her a pen, Amos."

He laid the paper and the money on the bed.

Aunt Theresy looked bewildered.

"They fixed it all up themselves, Theresy," explained Mr. Perkins. "It was all done when I blundered in on them. Francis wrote the agreement, and it seems to me to cover everything. Amos and I will witness the signatures, and nobody will want to dispute it, I'm sure."

"But there isn't any need of such a hurry," she said, "and this money ——" then she laughed.

"I suppose it's business. Give me the pen, Amos. Is this where I sign?"

"Right here!" Timothy watched her while she wrote, in fine old-fashioned writing, "Theresa Hinton," and then seized the pen.

"Come on, everybody, hurry up!"

When the last signature had been blotted, Mr. Perkins looked at his watch.

"We'd better be getting out of here," he said, "but before we go, I want to ask a favor of you. All of you. Will you please keep this whole transaction a secret? Will you please keep this visit to-day a secret? Can you? Can you earn your money and carry out your plans without telling anyone? I can't tell you why I'm asking this, but I have a good reason, and just as soon as possible I will tell you what it is. We might have this club a secret order, and have this for one of the secrets. That is, if we were all members of the club. But Theresy and Amos are not members."

"Well, they can be," cried Timothy. "Now we've started to grow, we might as well have some more members."

"Oh, I know a lovely plan," said Belle. "Let's change the name and call it the 'We Four, Lots More,' and have our principal object to work for the trees, all kinds of trees."

"Say, Perkins," said Amos, "as a member of this club, I can't see where you can sell off lumber the way you have been doing, can you?"

So the name was changed and two more members were added to the club. Then Mr. Perkins and the children hurried out the back door, first looking to see if Miss Margaret were anywhere in sight.

When she came back, Aunt Theresy was asleep. Her cheeks were pink, and when Miss Margaret exclaimed, "Why, how different she looks," Amos replied carelessly, "She took some toast and malted milk before she went to sleep."

"Toast and malted milk? I haven't been able to get her to take a thing!"

And when Aunt Theresy woke, Miss Margaret could not understand what had caused the wonderful change. She seemed like herself. The worry and sadness were gone, and she began

to plan what to do when she was up and around the house.

"Amos Bean!" Miss Margaret demanded, in the kitchen, "what did you do or say to her to work this miracle?"

"I couldn't say," was his truthful answer, "but haven't you ever noticed that sometimes things seem to have their run, and after they have been just as bad as they could be, they take a turn for the better? Probably it's that way with Theresy." And not another word would he say.

The children and Mr. Perkins were all late to supper. They were all scolded, and asked, "Where have you been all this time?" Now, of course, they could not tell what had really happened, so, each one, as they had planned on the way back from Aunt Theresy's, replied, "Well, we had a very important club meeting, and it lasted longer than we thought it would."

"Club meeting!" said Grandmother, as Timothy filled the wood-box, whistling as he had not whistled for many a day, "you'd better not let that club take all your time." But to Grandfather she said, "It seems to be a good thing,

after all. He hasn't filled that box like that for one good while."

And Mrs. Perkins, taking the supper from the oven, where she had been keeping it warm, said, "Pa, I sent you to bring Belle home, not to go traipsing all over creation with her. I suppose you'll be joining that precious club, next." And Belle tried so hard not to laugh that she choked and had to be patted on the back, and drink water, and wipe tears from her eyes.

When Trudy ran into the little red house calling "Good-night" to Francis, who was hurrying up the path across the fields, Mother said, "I was just going to send Father after you, dear. You must not stay so late at the club. It is too far away."

Trudy told her that Mr. Perkins had walked part way home with them, and promised not to stay again, and then she said, "Oh, Mother dear, aren't the folks in Todd's Ferry just lovely?" But when Mother agreed with her and asked her why, she said, "Oh,—because ——" and hugged Mother very tight indeed.

Amos, walking home through the starry

twilight, thought so too; but most of all did Aunt Theresy think it as she lay resting in her bed, quiet and happy, listening to the gentle wind singing in her tall pines. As she grew drowsy, the pines seemed to say, over and over, "Friends—friends—your friends—our friends—true friends"—until she slept and waked again to a new and joyful day.

CHAPTER XIV

KEEPING A SECRET

"FRANCIS," said Timothy, "is everybody pestering you to know what you are doing with all your money? It's pretty fierce with me! I'm trying to earn all I can for the trees, and folks keep asking me what I've done with the other money I earned last week. I'm afraid Grandmother will make me put some in the bank. And the kids call me 'Miser Todd'!"

It was a fine July day. White clouds floated in the blue sky, and the west wind gently moved the tree-tops. By the brook, where Francis and Timothy were taking a short cut to Belle's house, the spotted jewel-weed climbed over the rocks, and on the hillside red wood lilies swayed on their long stems.

The boys were going to a meeting of the club. The children had been busy during the last days of school, and had had little time to earn money until lately. During the last of June and the first of July they had tried in every possible way

to swell the fund for the trees. They had managed to get eight dollars, and Mr. Perkins had promptly added sixteen; Aunt Theresy had signed a receipt for twenty-four dollars "on account," and Timothy had filed it away with the precious agreement.

"Mr. Johnston hasn't said anything about money," Francis answered Timothy, after a pause, "but when I asked Miss Margaret if I might use the old barn to print pictures in, and she found out I was going to develop and print for the summer boarders, she thought it would be too hard for me. I don't think she likes it very well."

"It's an awful nuisance keeping it a secret," grumbled Timothy. "I don't see why Mr. Perkins won't let us tell. We needn't mention him, if he doesn't want folks to know he is in it. We could just say we were going to buy the trees and we needed the money. I thought at first it would be fun to have a secret society, but it's getting to be something terrible."

"Trudy's mother said, the other day, the girls were regular money-grabbers," Francis con-

tinued, "because they are making preserves to sell. And then, you know, they are filling those ferneries for Miss Fields, and she pays them for that."

They were at the sap-house now. Through the quiet of the woods came loud shouts, and the sounds of tearing wood and squealing nails.

"There's something doing at the sawmill," cried Timothy. "Come on up and see what it is."

At the sawmill, men were hurrying about, taking down the machinery. The sawyer himself was overseeing the work, and he recognized the boys. He was not at all pleased to see them. In fact, he was very cross.

"Now don't hang around here!" he shouted. "You'll get hurt. This is no place for kids. Get right out! We're in a hurry, and you're liable to have something fall on you."

"Going away?" asked Timothy, perching on a stump.

"Yes—and as fast as we can!" snapped the sawyer. "Been hanging 'round here for weeks, thinking we could get those big pines over yon-

der. The old lady was all ready to sell, too, when she was taken sick, so I waited till she was better, and then, by gracious, she changed her mind. Can't find out what made her. No one seems to know anything about it. And Perkins went back on *his* bargain—at least, he led me to expect he'd sell more, and then he changed his mind. Never saw such people! Get out of the way now; we're going to load the engine on that bogie."

Timothy slipped from the stump. He took a folded leaflet from his pocket.

"It's pretty dirty," he said; "I've been carrying it around a long time, but I guess you can read it. My friend, the Senator from New Hampshire, gave it to me. I'll give it to you. You can keep it. It tells the right way and the wrong way to cut timber. Well, good-bye. I'm glad you didn't get the big trees. They look better where they are."

He laid the leaflet on a rock and scampered away.

The boys chuckled. "That secret isn't so bad, after all, is it, Timothy?" said Francis.

And then they heard a call and saw Amos coming from the schoolhouse woods.

"Where's Trudy?" he said. "I've found some pretty little pieces of fungus for her ferneries. And some checkerberry and twinflower."

Belle and Trudy were gathering odd little vines and flowers for Miss Fields, who arranged them in glass bowls and sold them in her tea-room. They roamed the fields and woods and swamps, finding pitcher-plant with its weird pitchers of sweet sticky liquid, little ferns, streamers of partridge-berry, and always hunting for some brilliant fungus that would give an odd touch to the loveliness of the fernery. Amos, as he drove over his fish-route, kept a sharp lookout and often stopped his horse to climb up a bank for some treasure.

Belle made delicious little sandwiches and someone found it out. Soon the boarders were coming to Mrs. Perkins' door, and saying, "Oh, Mrs. Perkins, could Belle make us some sandwiches for a little picnic to-morrow? Mrs. Green had some for her little girl's birthday party, and

they were the dearest things. What a capable little daughter you have, Mrs. Perkins!" And Belle would whisper to her father that another dollar had been added to the tree fund, and he would hug her up, and point his right forefinger toward the sky. Belle would point skywards too, and Mrs. Perkins would stare up and see nothing, and wonder what they were pointing at, and she would stare and say, "Are you two crazy?"

But that was the sign of the club. Mr. Perkins had invented it. He said that all secret orders had a "high sign," and if theirs couldn't have a high sign, it was no good. And their secret was about something exceedingly high, so they pointed as high as they could. The sign meant "High up, like the tops of our trees, and going up, like the amount of money we're raising."

Amos went along with the boys to the meeting. They stopped at the store for a drink of water, and to chat with Mr. McAdam, then went up the road to Belle's house. The boys were playing ball on the village green, and Dave Little and Henry White hailed Timothy.

"Hey, Timothy, come on over and practise! The boarders have challenged us, and we want you for pitcher. We haven't got a decent pitcher. Ben Dobson is too busy to play."

"I'm too busy, too," said Timothy, hurrying up the road, for oh, how he did want to stay and play ball. And he didn't feel any better when the boys jeered after him, "Miser! Old Miser Todd!"

Belle had news.

"Listen," she said; "have you heard what they are going to do for Old Home Week? Of course you haven't, because the committee met here only last night. You know we never had an Old Home Week before, so everybody wants to make it a success. They made lots of plans, and Pa is on ever so many committees. I heard them tell him to write to the Senator—you know, our Senator who gave us our tickets to the Members' Gallery—and ask him to come up here and make a speech. They are going to have a different celebration for each day, and it will last three days. The first day will be a get-acquainted day, like a big picnic, in the grove where we have

the Fourth of July exercises, or in the Town Hall, if it rains; one day they are going to have a pageant in the meadow where the movie people had their village; and the last day isn't decided yet. Pa said he'd be responsible for that day, so they left it to him. He's been home all day, writing letters, and he wouldn't let me help him, and I *always* do. What do you suppose he's going to have for his celebration?"

"Isn't Mr. Johnston on any committee?"

"Oh, yes, on almost all of them. And there's a big committee of women to plan for the food, and they are going to find out where everybody is who ever lived in Todd's Ferry, and write letters to them, asking them to come back for Old Home Week."

"Perhaps your father was writing those letters."

"No, because he isn't on that committee."

"Oh, gee! Won't it be great!"

"Oh!" Trudy exclaimed, "why don't *we* write to Stanley Blake and the movie people, and ask them to come?"

"Perhaps they would take some pictures."

"Perhaps Claire and Isabelle could come. Oh, I wish they would! I'd love to see them."

"Who's going to get up the pageant?" Timothy inquired.

"Miss Fields. It's going to be the history of Todd's Ferry. Amos is to be the first settler" —Amos looked rather surprised, but he did not refuse. "You know, Amos, old Adoniram Todd who came in here with his axe on his shoulder, seeking a place to settle, and found the lake and the springs, and cleared a spot for his house, and then went back after the house was built and brought his wife to live here. And there will be lots of dances, and costumes, and spirits of the woods, and spirits of the trees, and the water; and, oh, I don't know it all, but it's going to be perfectly lovely, and I do hope it won't rain and spoil everything."

"When is it?"

"The last of August."

"Oh, there won't be any rain at that time. August is generally a pretty dry month, except for thunder-showers."

"Thunder-showers!" the girls cried out together.

"Why, Timothy, a thunder-storm would be the worst thing of all. It would catch the audience and the performers, and everybody."

How Timothy laughed at them. "It hasn't come yet," he said, "so don't squeal before you are hurt. I've got to be getting home. Come on, Trudy. Let's stop at the store and see if there is any mail."

The stage had just arrived, so they waited for Mr. McAdam to sort the letters. There was a good deal of mail for the three houses, and they looked it over as they walked up the road. They met other people coming down to the village for mail, and to the tea-room for tea and souvenirs. Still others were sauntering back to the boarding-houses, reading their letters and papers. Suddenly everyone looked up, for Timothy had given a great shout.

"Look at this!" he cried. "Oh, come here! Come here! I've got a letter from Abbott Kimball! Here's his name, right on the envelope."

"Well, open it," begged Trudy. "See what he says."

"Gee!" mused Timothy, turning the letter over and over, "it's postmarked California. He must have gone back there."

"Open it—open it, you goose!"

"Oh, say—listen to this—'Dear Tim' (you know he's the only one that ever calls me Tim): 'When you receive this letter, I shall be on my way East, as I start to-morrow. My boss, our Uncle Sam, has given me another assignment up your way. I am coming into New Hampshire to do a bit of work, and may get around to see you. If I walk into your kitchen some evening, do you suppose your grandmother would give me any supper?'"

Would she? Well, would she? The children broke into a run. They raced all the way home, rushing into the farmhouse with the marvellous news and all talking at once. When Grandmother and Grandfather at last understood what it was all about, Grandfather said gravely, "Well, I suppose we could do as we did when Claire and Isabelle came. We could put him in

the trundle-bed. But, maybe, being a Forest Ranger, he'd feel more at home out-of-doors. Of course, we couldn't furnish him with any very wild animals—only foxes and skunks, but ——"

"I don't know about that," said Grandmother. "I think you children are pretty good substitutes for wild animals at this present minute. Calm down, now. Timothy, you do your chores. I couldn't cook a supper for Abbott unless I had a full wood-box."

CHAPTER XV

MR. PERKINS MAKES UP HIS MIND

TRUDY could hardly believe her ears when Mr. Perkins called her on the telephone at ten o'clock in the morning. Usually at that time he was at the station, fussing about the stage and waiting for the train from the city. But it really *was* Mr. Perkins, for he said so. He said, "Hello, Trudy, is this you? Can you come to the sap-house this afternoon at two o'clock sharp? Very important meeting of the club. Don't forget, now. Good-bye."

He called Timothy and Francis too, for Trudy telephoned them as soon as she could get the line. They could not imagine what it was about. Francis said that he knew that Ben Dobson and Bill were driving the stage, for they had been up to get some express parcels for Mr. Johnston. The only thing to do was to wait; but, of course, no one could wait till two o'clock.

It was not much after one when the three children started down the path behind Grandfather's barn. All the way, they talked and wondered, but could think of no reason for the meeting.

"It can't be anything to do with Old Home Week," said Timothy, "because the grown folks are running that."

"Oh, I do hope nothing is going to happen to the trees," said Trudy. "You don't suppose Mr. Perkins has changed his mind, do you?"

"He can't," Timothy said decidedly, "because we won't vote to let him, and he said himself everything should be decided by vote."

Early as they were, Mr. Perkins and Belle were there before them. They had never seen Mr. Perkins quite as he was this afternoon. His eyes were twinkling, and he laughed a great deal, and joked, so they knew there was nothing serious the matter. But he would not say why he had called the meeting.

"Open the door, Timothy," he said, "and leave it open so the others will know we are here. We're a little early, but it's a nice day to be out. Let's stroll around a bit, and look at the scenery.

Mr. Johnston has cleared the spring up fine, hasn't he? And what a nice view you get of the tops of the big pines, don't you? Really, I'm quite proud of the big pines; I've been noticing how many places you can see them from—pretty nearly all over town."

"What are we going to do?" demanded Timothy. "Who else is coming?"

Mr. Perkins laughed. "Wait," he said. "The other members of the club must be here before we can proceed to business."

Soon they saw Amos strolling up from the brook. In his hand he had a bunch of green leaves and flowers that looked like soft white round balls, with hundreds of tiny spikes sticking out all over them. "Buttonbush," he said to Francis; "it grows in wet places. I followed the brook up from the village and picked a posy on the way. Found a nest or two, and in the meadow picked up a four-leaved clover. Ought to have good luck to-day. Hullo, Perkins, what's up?"

The children were teasing Belle to tell them, but she knew no more than they did; so they had

to wait until they saw Aunt Theresy coming along the path. She waved her hand, and they all went to meet her. Mr. Perkins' eyes twinkled now, and he took her by the arm. "Come on," he called to the others, "might as well go in and get seats. The show is about to begin."

Inside the sap-house they seated Aunt Theresy at the head of the long table. Mr. Perkins and Amos drew up chairs, and Mr. Perkins said solemnly, "Members, be seated."

And then they discovered that there was one chair too many. "Leave it," said Mr. Perkins; "it will soon be occupied." He looked out the door. "It will be occupied immediately," he told them, and stood aside as the Santa Claus man entered, bowed solemnly, and took the empty chair.

Mr. Perkins rapped on the table.

"Members of the 'We Four, Lots More' Club," he said, "and friend," he bowed to Mr. Johnston, who bowed again. "A serious matter has come to my attention. I am told, on good authority, that the members of this organization are getting tired of keeping secrets."

Timothy glared at Belle, who looked away.

"I am sorry to hear that," went on Mr. Perkins, "because I was going to propose something for the club to do in connection with Old Home Week, but it would be *ab-so-lute-ly* necessary to keep it a secret among the persons here present, if we decide to do it. Of course, if you are tired of keeping secrets, that ends the matter, but I am very much disappointed, for I feel sure that this proposition is one that you would all like."

"What is it?" cried Timothy. "I only said it was getting awful hard to earn money without telling——" He suddenly stopped. He had forgotten that Mr. Johnston did not belong to the club.

Trudy had been watching the men and had seen the glance that Mr. Perkins had given to Mr. Johnston when he bowed. She suspected that Mr. Johnston knew the plan, and that was enough for her. "Tell us about it," she said. "I guess we can keep another secret until Old Home Week. That isn't a very long time."

Then Mr. Perkins became serious.

"I hope you can," he told them, "for this is a

plan that is very dear to me. I want you to agree to it. I have been thinking about it ever since the day you elected me to membership in the club. I have been making a few inquiries to see if it could be carried out, and I am assured that it can. Now the whole matter rests with you. I have talked it over with Aunt Theresy, and she approves. The matter is this. I want to buy the big pines myself and give them and the land about them to the town of Todd's Ferry for a public park."

"Ooh—ooh ——" such a gasp from four children! The grown-ups were watching them and saying never a word.

"Wait—don't speak yet." Mr. Perkins raised his hand. "Of course, we could do it together. I realize that you four children thought of the plan to buy them, but that was wholly to help our dear Theresy. No, I haven't told Mr. Johnston a word about that, you can tell him later," and he turned to Mr. Johnston who was looking bewildered enough. "That's another story, Mr. Johnston. Now let me go on before I get mixed. Theresy could give them to the

town, but then she wouldn't get any money for them, and I shouldn't be in it at all. Now Theresy needs the money, and I need—oh, more than you can ever guess—I need to tell my fellow-townsmen that I'm not so black as I'm painted. You see, I did sell off timber in a most reckless manner and never thought much about it, although Amos, here, and Turner and lots of others used to say what they thought of me. But when the youngsters began to see that it was foolish, if not wicked, and began to care enough about an old fellow like me—it was the trees they cared for most, I guess—but anyway they sent me stuff from Washington, and post-cards for my collection, I began to think a little. After that, I came up here one day and found them—well, anyway, I thought more and more, and now I want to make up to the town as best I can. I want to buy those trees and a good part of the surrounding land, and give it to the people of Todd's Ferry as a park. And I want to do it for part of the celebration of Old Home Week. I'd like to have it a secret, as I said, but if you children are tired of keeping secrets ——"

He could not go on. For all four children were clinging to him, and talking at once, while Mr. Johnston was begging somebody to tell him what it was all about.

"Oh, Belle," cried Trudy, dancing about the room, "isn't your father just the grandest man? And you didn't know a thing about it?"

"No, but I suspected he was up to something. And you'd better let him do it. When Pa makes up his mind, nothing can stop him."

"Who wants to stop him?" shouted Timothy.

"*Will* you tell me what you are talking about?" said Mr. Johnston, seizing Francis as he whirled by him, for all the children were racing up and down the sap-house like mad creatures. They stopped—no one exactly wanted to tell their plans for saving the trees. Amos spoke.

"Perhaps I'd better be the one to explain," he said. "You see, these youngsters found out that Aunt Theresy was worrying herself sick over fear that she would have to sell her big pines ——"

"I should have had to sell them," interrupted

Aunt Theresy. "I had already made up my mind to that, and had almost told the lumbermen so."

"They found it out," Amos went on, "and having had a good example in helping others set them by a man named Johnston, they decided that something must be done. They felt that we old folks had enough expense, so they simply planned to buy the trees themselves and pay for them as soon as they could. That is why they have been so anxious to earn money; every cent has gone toward the purchase of the big pines ——"

"But Mr. Perkins helped, oh, he helped lots," Trudy cried, "for when we were talking it over here in the sap-house there was an awful shower and he came up after Belle, and he heard us and wanted to help, so we all went over and told Aunt Theresy, and Amos was there, and it was all settled, and it has been fun, and it was splendid to think the trees were ours, but it will be better for them to be everybody's."

And now it was Mr. Perkins' turn to be embarrassed. He had tried to stop Trudy when

she told of his share, but she went right on and told everything.

Aunt Theresy got out of her chair and came round the table to him. "Oh, Cephas, Cephas," she said, "when you came to talk about buying for the town you never said you had a hand in the children's scheme. Oh, how many good friends I have!"

Mr. Johnston had another attack of that hay fever that sometimes bothered him. He sniffed and coughed and wiped his eyes. And he said, "Theresy, I don't wonder you got well after taking that prescription."

Mr. Perkins said, "Well, well, then you all agree to let me have my way?"

"Vote—vote," said Amos. "All in favor of having Mr. Cephas Perkins buy the Big Pines and give them to Todd's Ferry on Old Home Week for a public park will manifest it by sitting down and talking business."

So once more there was another plan made in the sap-house. Mr. Johnston said he would have the proper papers made out, and Mr. Perkins said he would guarantee that the selectmen would

agree, and that the Senator had promised to come and make a speech. Then Mr. Johnston rose and said that it might be possible to have some pictures taken for the Government, as his friend Stanley Blake would be in the near neighborhood at that time, and he would try to have him present on that day.

"And maybe Abbott will be here too," said Timothy excitedly. "He wrote me a letter and said so."

"Did he?" said Mr. Johnston. "If Abbott comes, I'll have him look over my Christmas-tree farm. We can't let a Forest Ranger into town without making use of his knowledge."

"I'll have him look over my land that has been cut," Mr. Perkins said; "he will be able to give me advice on re-foresting."

"Hear that?" whispered Timothy to Francis. "Hear him say 're-foresting'? He wouldn't use that word if he hadn't been reading the stuff I sent him."

"Oh, by the way," added Mr. Perkins, as they all rose to go home, "we haven't really decided

after all—you didn't say whether you could keep another secret."

And then he had to run from them. But before he could get out the door, Mr. Johnston barred the way. "Well," he said, "has this secret anything to do with this business?" He raised his right forefinger to the sky. "I've seen a lot of that lately."

"It's the sign of the club. We point to the tops of the pines."

"It's a good sign. If you will elect me a member of the club I'll have some pins made, so we can each wear one. I hardly think they will be ready before Old Home Week, but perhaps you won't mind waiting."

"Just a minute," said Mr. Perkins as Timothy was locking the door. "If I am to buy the big pines, you must take back the money you have paid in and let me pay the whole price. Oh, yes, it wouldn't be legal any other way."

"No, that wouldn't be fair. Why, we earned it for that; we didn't earn it for ourselves. No, we can't do that."

"I know," said Timothy. "Don't they al-

ways have a tablet or something telling about who gave the land? Like those in Washington that mark historic places? Let's use our money for one of those."

"A granite one from the quarry!"

"With gold letters on it!"

"Oh, wouldn't that be wonderful? Right here in Todd's Ferry."

"And people will come from all around to see it and to see the trees."

"My gracious! Maybe they will come from miles and miles away."

"You can't tell *who* might come to see the Todd's Ferry Park! Or what might happen!"

"I guess that's right," agreed Mr. Johnston; "you can't tell what may happen when these youngsters get to making plans."

CHAPTER XVI

OLD HOME WEEK

It had seemed an easy thing to say that the money earned by the children, and used as part payment for the pines, could be taken for a tablet to mark the land that Mr. Perkins was going to give the town; but the grown-ups realized that getting the tablet ready in a few weeks was no easy task. But the Santa Claus man did it. And he did it so easily, too. Probably that was because he had Santa's own jolly way of getting people to help him.

First, he got a stone-cutter from Concord to come to Todd's Ferry; then he had a conference with Mr. Perkins and decided exactly what to say on the tablet. He and Miss Margaret planned the inscription, and gave the design to the stone-cutter.

The man said, " Pretty short notice. I don't

know whether I can get it out on time or not." But Mr. Johnston only said, " Well, do the best you can." Then he sat down on a big rough granite block near where the man was working and watched him for a long time. After awhile, he said, " Have a cigar, won't you? And take a rest while I tell you the history of this tablet. But don't mention it to any of the townspeople, for it is a secret. I thought you might like to hear about it, as long as you are a part of it."

Then he told him about the trees, and about the children's plan to help Aunt Theresy, and about Mr. Perkins, and then he stood up and stretched and said, " I must be going along. Do the best you can, won't you? " And the stone-cutter answered, " I surely will, and look here, Mr. Johnston, this tablet is going to be done on time! "

The quarry was so far away from the village, and to climb to it was so rocky and steep that very few boarders came there; and just at this particular time everyone was busy getting ready for the Old Home Week celebration. So no one bothered the stone-cutter as he chipped and polished and scraped, and sang at his work.

Through the long hot summer days he was alone in the quarry, and at night he strolled down to Mr. Perkins' house, where he was boarding.

The children came often to see him, and were much interested in the progress of the work. Even Francis was able to scramble up to the quarry now, and the boys blazed a trail along the easiest route up the hill. They talked over the plans for Old Home Week, and told the stone-cutter about the pageant that Miss Fields was preparing.

"It's going to be great," declared Timothy, "even if there is a lot of dancing in it, because it's going to be in that big field where the moving-picture people were. You know I told you we had a moving-picture company up here last summer. Everything is going to be out-of-doors, and all the boarders are going to take part, at least, lots of them are ——"

"Yes," interrupted Belle, "and they are sewing on the costumes now. Every boarding-house piazza is full of women sewing on blue and green stuff. Oh, it's going to be beautiful! And we children are to be butterflies, pink ones and yel-

low and lavender, and the boys are going to be the lunar moths, all in light green!"

"I'm not!" cried Timothy. "I'm going to be a bat! In dark brown, with great leather wings that are coming from New York, and I'm going to scoot all over the place. I'm going to keep my costume on after it's over, too, and chase folks! I'll bet, when it gets dark, I can scare somebody ——"

"Ooh, Timothy, don't scare me, will you?" wailed a voice from a lodge high above them. As they turned quickly, the voice went on, "Ooh, kind Timothy, don't scare me, will you? I've faced mountain lions and field mice, but never a bat-boy!"

"Who's that?"

"Ooh, Trudy, you won't let him hurt me, will you? Because if I get scared in Todd's Ferry, when I've just come ——"

And then Timothy knew the voice!

"It's the *Forest Ranger!*" he shouted, leaping up the ledge. "It's our Forest Ranger, come to Todd's Ferry!"

Abbott Kimball came out from behind the

bushes and jumped lightly down the granite blocks.

"Howdy, folks?" he called as they ran to him. "If you're half as glad to see me as I am to see you, you're glad, all right. Say, Todd's Ferry is great."

They crowded about him, seizing him by hands, by coat and by arms.

"Oh, Abbott!" shouted Timothy, "when did you come?"

"Timothy!" Trudy reproved him, "you mustn't call him Abbott. Maybe he won't like it."

"Maybe he will," said the Forest Ranger. "I shan't feel at home unless you call me by my name. And my name is Abbott."

"How did you know where to find us?" asked Francis.

"Mr. Johnston told me you were all up here, looking over some monument, or something, and said I'd find a trail, so I came along. Found the trail all right. Good one, too. Blazes on the trees well made, rags on the bushes, signs at the crossroads, all complete. Who did it?"

"The boys made it."

"We tried to do it the way you told us when we were in Washington. But, say, how did you happen to get here? Are you going to stay for Old Home Week?"

"Aren't you going to stay all summer?" demanded Timothy. "Where are your things? What room did Grandmother give you? Did you bring your burro? Can I ride him?"

"I reckon to stay awhile anyway. I'm up in this locality on a little business, and hearing about your celebration, I thought I'd take it in."

"Did you come on the noon stage?"

"No, came up in an automobile with some friends. To be exact, I came in a yellow machine that has been up this way before."

"Not Mr. Sims'? Is he here? Gracious mighty! What's going to happen next?"

The Forest Ranger grinned. "Any law against the troupe coming back for Old Home Week? Didn't you ask them? Stanley said ——"

"Is Stanley Blake here?"

"Say, I guess you'd better come down to Mr.

Johnston's and see for yourselves. In fact, he told me to tell you to come home. You have company."

And not another word would he say about who the company might be. He talked about the trees they passed; about the lovely view of the lake and the mountain; he showed them a flying squirrel leaping from the top of a high spruce; he found a bee going into his hole in the ground, and made them wait for him to come out when they could not believe such a thing possible; he whistled to the birds who answered and followed him; but not a word about human beings.

Trudy had a wild idea. It seemed too good to be true, but she ran ahead and was the first one to catch sight of the big house. On the piazza were four or five grown-ups, and—yes, there were two little girls!

"Hurry, hurry!" she called. "Isabelle and Claire are here! I thought they might be."

Timothy yelled. Claire and Isabelle turned, saw them, and raced down the steps and up through the garden to meet them. Such a chattering! At last everybody understood that the

moving-picture company had just returned from California, and, having a few days before going to the North Shore on Massachusetts Bay, had motored up to Todd's Ferry for Old Home Week.

"And, oh, folks," cried Claire, clapping her hands, "we saw you in the picture! Away out in California! In a wee little place where we were working on location. They had a movie show twice a week, in such a tiny hall, and we went, just for fun, and what do you think? They were showing that picture of you, Trudy, making jelly, and when Timothy came whistling down through the fields, a man in the audience shouted out, 'By jiminy, I know that boy! That's Timothy Todd, from my old home!'"

"Why, who knows me out in California?"

"Oh, Timothy, it must have been Mr. Haddock, the fish-man."

"Yes, that was his name. We saw him after the show, and he told us he used to peddle fish in Todd's Ferry, but his health gave out and he sold out to Amos Bean, and he said, too, that you and Trudy helped Amos earn the money ——"

"Oh, no, we didn't. That was the aviator, you remember. We told you about him. He had engine trouble in a cross-country race, and had to land in that field where you had the village, and Amos helped him fix his engine. He got the prize and he sent Amos money enough to buy the fish-route."

"Well, anyway, Mr. Haddock said if we ever saw you again or if we went to Todd's Ferry, to remember him to everyone, and tell them he was feeling fine. So we told him all the news, and he was awfully glad to hear it."

"Isn't it great you could come!"

Then they had to speak to Stanley and Mr. Sims, and go down to the barn and look over the yellow automobile, and introduce the Forest Ranger to everyone who didn't know him. They were just as busy as could be until supper time. Miss Margaret invited them all to supper, and they had a picnic on the piazza, and laughed and talked and had a most wonderful time. When the moon came up behind the mountain, Abbott said, "I must be getting back. I haven't unpacked a thing. Come along, Stan."

"Come on, you children. We'll take you home. It's right on our way."

"Aren't you coming to my house?" inquired Timothy.

"No," said Abbott, "I'm boarding with my new adopted aunt. She took such good care of my cousin Stanley when he was here last year that I've asked her to be my aunt too, and she says she will. She calls me 'Abbott' and I call her 'Aunt Theresy.'"

They walked down to the village with Belle, and then the men took the trail behind the schoolhouse to the Big Pines.

In the white farmhouse, Timothy was lying in bed planning all the places he would show Abbott; in the little red house, three girls laughed and giggled in Trudy's room; and in the Town Hall, a group of men gathered, and listened and nodded approval, as they heard Mr. Perkins outline his plans for the last day of Old Home Week.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DAY OF THE BIG PINES

OLD HOME WEEK was wonderful! The pageant was a great success. People sat on the slope beneath the trees that overlooked the meadow and watched the actors come out from the grove, down by the brook, and dance on the smooth green grass. Timothy, as the bat, chased the moths and butterflies, and everyone clapped and clapped.

The banquet in the Town Hall was as sociable as a family party, and the Senator made a funny speech, for the Senator came for the whole three days, and stayed with Mr. Perkins. At the end of his speech, he glanced at Mr. Perkins laughingly, and said, "You are all invited to be the guests of our friend, Perkins, on the last day of our celebration. He will entertain you at three o'clock, under the Big Pines. I'd advise you all to go."

Everyone decided to take that advice, for the programme for the third and last day of Old Home Week had been kept a profound secret. On the printed notices it had merely said, " Plans for Thursday will be announced at the banquet." And when the plans were announced, no one knew any more than before.

Mr. Sims had been let into the secret, and it was lucky he had. His experiences in hustling moving-picture scenes together made him invaluable at the last minute.

All Wednesday night there were strange doings around the old pine trees. Shadowy forms moved by the side of the road; there was the sound of digging; there were low calls and muffled laughter; a light burned all the night through in Aunt Theresy's house, and smoke came from the chimney at two o'clock in the morning, when Aunt Theresy made hot coffee for the workers. When she called them to lunch, Mr. Sims, Stanley and Abbott, the stone-cutter, Father and Amos, Mr. Perkins and Mr. Johnston, all responded, dusty and tired, but so pleased! All the rest of Todd's Ferry were abed and asleep.

The rising sun revealed a changed place. In front of the big pines a platform, covered with green cloth, held a small table and several chairs. A little way beyond, and so placed as to be visible to travelers coming in either direction, stood the granite marker, brought from the quarry and set up after dark, on the foundation that the men had prepared before and had covered with brush and pine needles so that it had never been noticed. The marker was hidden by a flag, gathered into folds by a scarlet cord.

During the forenoon of Thursday Amos stayed by the pines to keep inquisitive people from peeping at what was under the flag. Several times he had to laugh and joke with a boarder who was walking that way, and wanted to know what was going on; but he refused to tell anything about the day's plans, saying, " Come down at three o'clock, and you'll know all about it."

The " We Four, Lots More " were proudly wearing their new pins. And they did not try to hide them either! They liked it when someone said, " Oh, you have a new pin. What does it mean? Such an odd design." They laughed

and raised their right hands high over their heads, pointing to the sky. And then the person would stare up and see nothing unusual and wonder what it was all about. The club members had great fun all the forenoon.

At two o'clock people began to gather at the Big Pines. They came on foot, in automobiles, and in carriages. Timothy was here, there and everywhere, telling where to park the autos, advising Grandmother and Grandfather where to sit to have the best view of the exercises, and calling greetings to this one and that. Francis brought Miss Margaret and Mother. Trudy was guarding the marker, very careful that no one should get a glimpse before the proper time.

Such a lot of people! For a long way the road was filled with standing automobiles, and all the open space about the trees, the little terraces on the hill that sloped up on the other side of the road, the lower branches of the maples, even, were filled with the Todd's Ferry people, with the boarders, and with the friends and neighbors who had come to the celebration.

Just before three o'clock Aunt Theresy's door

opened. Dressed in an old-fashioned silk dress that had been her grandmother's, her hair held up with a big shell comb, her curls fluttering on either side of her happy face, she came out, escorted by the Senator and Mr. Perkins. Mr. Johnston followed, but not onto the platform with them. He stopped where the children were standing and whispered to them; and Trudy and Timothy, Belle and Francis, went up the green steps to the platform and took their seats.

No one knew what was coming, but everyone felt that it was going to be something very wonderful and beautiful—a fitting end to a happy three days of friendship. So the audience smiled and nodded and clapped when Mr. Perkins stood up and looked at them a moment. He turned and gazed up into the mighty trees towering above the whole company. When he looked back at the people there was a little hush.

"Friends," he said, "our Senator has honored us with his presence during our Old Home Week, and to-day he will speak to you on a subject vital to the life of our country—trees."

The Senator made a little speech, telling them

what the children had already learned, how necessary and useful trees were to the life of man and beast, and although it was very interesting and well-told, it seemed to everyone only the beginning. The real reason for the celebration beneath the Big Pines had not yet come.

After he finished his speech the Senator seemed to think so too. For he laughed, and said, "I didn't fool you a bit, did I? Now you shall hear the real news. Brother Perkins is going to tell you a story."

"Once upon a time," began Mr. Perkins, while everyone sat up very straight and still to listen, "there lived a wicked villain. He went about, killing—killing—killing—but the queer part of it was, he did not know he was killing. He thought he was providing comforts and pleasures for his family, because he was getting money for his killing, and putting the money in the bank. At last, he could not kill fast enough by himself, so he hired a monster to help him—a monster that breathed steam, and had wicked teeth and cruel claws. Then he got more and more money, and thought very well of himself.

"But one day, a good old giant came to the place where he lived and brought a gift for the villain's little girl, a magic task that earned her a journey to a far country. There were other children who earned this journey too, and while they were in the far country they learned wisdom, and one of the things that they learned was that the villain who was killing—killing—all the time, was even worse than they had dreamed. But they all loved him, worthless old scamp though he was, so they said, 'Let us show him his wicked ways, and he will reform.'

"But, alas, he was very stubborn and ignorant, and he would not reform. Now, there lived in the woods, near the villain, a beautiful and lovely princess who had lived for many, many years, and had never done an unkind thing in all her long life, but had always been the friend of every man, woman and child, and every living creature that came her way. But she grew sick, and no one could learn the reason. She told only her lifelong friends, the Big Pines ——"

And now the people looked at Aunt Theresy,

and began faintly, just the least bit, to guess what Mr. Perkins was going to say.

He was going on.

"I think the pines must have whispered it to the children. Certainly no one of the grown folks could hear it. But the dreadful thing that was frightening the lovely princess was this. The cruel monster that the villain had brought to help him kill was trying to kill the princess's trees! Yes—that was what the villain killed—trees!

"Anyway, the children found this out, and all alone, they planned to deliver their beloved princess from her cruel fear. Now the princess believed that she must surrender her trees to the monster, for he said, 'Give me your trees, and I will pay you gold,' and the princess was in need of gold, for she had given generously to the poor and needy, and had no more wealth. But the children came to her, saying, 'You shall not sell your wonderful trees to the killing monster. We will work and earn gold and give it to you for them. We will save them, that they may stand forever in the forest and never be destroyed.'

"Now it happened that the wicked villain

heard what the children planned, and at last he understood, so he came to the children and asked if he might help to save the great trees, to make up for his sins in killing so many of their brethren. And the children were glad and said, 'We shall be glad to have you help us.'"

Mr. Perkins had to stop. The people of Todd's Ferry were shouting and clapping and waving their handkerchiefs. And the children were laughing and blushing and wishing they were anywhere except on that platform with so many people looking at them.

Aunt Theresy stood now. After they were quiet, she spoke.

"You have not heard quite all the story," she said, "for the good villain and the children did not stop with helping the poor princess. They—but, look!"

Slowly, and with dignity, she came down from the platform and walked to the flag that covered —something. She stooped and pulled the scarlet silken cord. Up and up came the flag, until at last all could see what was beneath it.

A tall oblong of granite from their own quarry

proclaimed to the people of Todd's Ferry the gift that was theirs on this Old Home Day! Cut on the face of the monument, they read it as they left their seats and crowded about Aunt Theresy.

THE PRIMEVAL PINES
and the land about them
belong forever
to
THE TOWN OF TODD'S FERRY
The gift of
THERESA HINTON
and
some of her friends

"Three cheers for Mr. Perkins!" shouted Mr. Johnston, and didn't the woods ring!

But Aunt Theresy was staring at the inscription on the stone.

"Oh, no!" she cried, clasping Mr. Perkins and Amos, who stood beside her. "Oh, that isn't right. I didn't give them. I always wanted to, but I couldn't afford it, and ——"

"Of course you gave them," said Mr. Perkins; "don't you suppose we want folks to know the

Big Pines have always belonged to a native of Todd's Ferry? There wouldn't be any sense putting any other names on that stone. There, don't say anything more about it. It's all settled. I've got to receive congratulations for my fairy story."

"Did you write that beautiful story all yourself, Mr. Perkins?" asked Trudy.

"Well," said Mr. Perkins, hugging Belle close to his side, "I must confess I had a little help; didn't I, daughter?"

"Gee," said Timothy, "I didn't know you could make a speech!"

"I couldn't, unless it was right in the family, as this one was."

There was just one more wonderful surprise that night. Before the Senator went away, he had a long talk with Mr. Johnston, and when he shook hands with the four children whom he had seen in Washington, he said, "I don't suppose you will object if the Government keeps Abbott Kimball up in Todd's Ferry awhile. There are several points about the place that we want to investigate, and he seems to be the one to do it.

And if he needs any help, you would perhaps show him about a little?"

"Oh, what does it all mean?" asked Trudy.

Abbott laughed. "Now, don't be impatient," he said. "You can't do everything all in a minute. You've just acquired a pretty fine park for your town; that's a good beginning. Perhaps there will be work to do pretty soon. Something to keep you busy. I'm going to stay here, and I'm going to board with Aunt Theresy, and I hope to see you often. Come and see me, won't you?"

"Will we?" said Timothy. "Well, will we? Just you wait and see!"

The Stories in this Series are:

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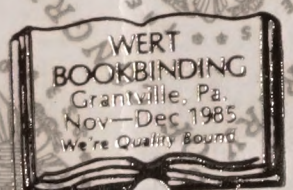

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